



Louisiana

# *Prescription Drug Safety Saves Lives*

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), America is in an opioid epidemic. Almost half of opioid overdose deaths happen to someone who is taking these drugs by prescription for pain relief – drugs like OxyContin<sup>®</sup>, Vicodin<sup>®</sup>, Percocet<sup>®</sup> and morphine.

## **IN LOUISIANA:**

- In 2015, there were more prescriptions for opioid drugs than there were state residents
- 861 Louisianians died from opioid overdoses (Rx and illegal) in 2015
- The state drug overdose rate is higher than the national average

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

- Always follow your doctor's or pharmacist's directions when taking a prescription drug.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you are worried about possible side effects of a drug, including physical dependence and addiction.
- Never take a drug prescribed for someone else or share your prescribed drugs with others.
- When you finish taking a drug, if you have any pills left over, get rid of them safely so they aren't stolen or misused. Many pharmacies and law enforcement agencies will let you turn in leftover drugs through secure disposal boxes. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about options in your area.

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## **STORE YOUR DRUGS SAFELY:**

- Store drugs in their original containers. The package labels have important information you may need.
- Don't keep them in the usual place, like a medicine cabinet. Hide them in a hard-to-find place or store them in a lockbox or safe.
- Keep all drugs away from kids and pets

## **HOW TO DISPOSE OF YOUR LEFTOVER DRUGS:**

- If you have leftover drugs, get rid of them safely so they aren't stolen or misused.
- The safest and most environmentally responsible option is to take unwanted medications to a drug take-back site.
- Many pharmacies and law enforcement agencies will let you turn in leftover drugs through secure disposal boxes – no questions asked.
- Find a safe drug drop box near you at **[bcbsla.com/safedrugdrop](http://bcbsla.com/safedrugdrop)**.
- If there are no drug drop boxes near you, check with your pharmacy about other options.

## **IF YOU THINK YOU MAY BE OPIOID DEPENDENT:**

- Talk to your doctor about any concerns you have from side effects to dependence.
- He or she will help you reduce your medication carefully or prescribe another drug that may be safer for you.

## **RESOURCES**

**[www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose)**

**[www.EndtheEpidemicLA.org](http://www.EndtheEpidemicLA.org)**