

# Preventing Opioid Abuse

Tackling the national opioid crisis requires ongoing collaboration across the dental, medical, law enforcement and education communities. Yet the most powerful partnership may be the one between patient and medical provider.

Opioids include addictive prescription painkillers such as oxycodone, codeine, morphine and others.

Patients have the power—and the responsibility—to guard against opioid misuse. Patients should:

- Share medical history with your dentist, including any history of drug use or addiction.
- Update medication list to help your dentist assess interactions between medicines.
- Take medications only as prescribed.
- Discuss alternative pain management strategies.
- Keep all medications away from children.
- Make sure teens are using painkilling medications only as prescribed.
- Never share medications with others.

## Did you know?

Dentists are the most likely medical professionals to prescribe opioids to 11- to 18-year-olds.<sup>1</sup>



# Quick bites

## Tips to remember when you have opioids or other prescriptions at home:

- Most opioid abuse happens because someone other than the patient uses the drug, so proper disposal of medications is critical.
- Some medications come with disposal directions, including whether they can be flushed down a toilet or disposed of in household trash.
- If you have questions, pharmacists can explain how to safely dispose of medications.
- Many communities have prescription drop-off days at police stations or city halls. In addition, the Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration maintains a database of drop-off locations. Go to [bit.ly/disposalsite](https://bit.ly/disposalsite) to search by ZIP code or city.



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1. Niodita Gupta, Marko Vujicic and Andrew Blatz, "Opioid prescribing practices from 2010 through 2015 among dentists in the United States," *The Journal of the American Dental Association* 149, no. 4 (2018): 237-245.

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New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, and Tennessee

