

## OxyContin Quick Facts

Who, what, where and how are people in the United States using OxyContin for abuse purposes?

What is OxyContin®?

OxyContin® is the brand name of a time-release formula of the analgesic chemical oxycodone. OxyContin®, which is produced by the pharmaceutical company Purdue Pharma, is prescribed as a pain medication. Instances of abuse of this drug have increased in recent years.

Street terms for OxyContin®: Hillbilly heroin, Oxy, Oxycotton (1)

What does OxyContin® look like?

- OxyContin® comes in tablet form.

What are the methods of usage?

- Chewing the tablets
- Snorting crushed tablets
- Dissolving tablets in water and injecting
- These methods cause a faster, highly dangerous release of medication.

## Who abuses OxyContin®?

- Abuse of OxyContin® in rural Maine, Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia brought national attention to this problem.
  
- The areas most currently affected by OxyContin® abuse are eastern Kentucky; New Orleans, Louisiana; southern Maine; Philadelphia and southwestern Pennsylvania; southwestern Virginia; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Phoenix, Arizona. (2)
  
- An increase in illegal use has been especially apparent on the East Coast. (3)
  
- 9% or 19.9 million Americans have used pain relievers illegally in their lifetime. (4)

## How does OxyContin® get to the United States?

- Because it is a legal drug, OxyContin® is supplied across the country for legitimate medical purposes.
  
- Word of mouth has allowed users to devise illicit usage techniques.
  
- Pharmacy robberies, health care fraud, and international trafficking constitute illicit distribution ability.

## How much does OxyContin® cost?

- When legally sold, a 10-mg tablet of OxyContin® will cost \$1.25 and an 80-mg tablet will cost \$6.

- When illegally sold, a 10-mg tablet of OxyContin® can cost between \$5 and \$10. An 80-mg tablet can cost between \$65 and \$80. (5)

What are some consequences of illicit OxyContin® use?

- Long-term usage can lead to physical dependence. (6)

- A large dosage can cause severe respiratory depression that can lead to death. (7)

- Withdrawal symptoms include restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes with goose bumps, and involuntary leg movements. (8)

1. Office of National Drug Control Policy, Street Terms: Drugs and the Drug Trade.
2. Drug Enforcement Administration, OxyContin ®: Pharmaceutical Diversion, March 2002.
3. DEA Congressional Testimony, December 11, 2001.
4. Office of National Drug Control Policy, OxyContin® Fact Sheet.
5. United States Department of Justice, OxyContin® Diversion and Abuse, January 2001.
6. National Institute on Drug Abuse, Prescription Drugs: Abuse and Addiction, February 2002.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

For help with Prescription drug  
abuse or addiction:

Call  
Toll Free: 888-9NO-DRUGS or 888-966-3784

{glossar}

Source: Drug Enforcement Agency

Image Source: Drug Enforcement Agency