

Your safety is important to us

As of 2013, deaths and illnesses related to **overdose, misuse and abuse** of opioid painkillers are on the rise for the 11th straight year.



Overdose

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* states: "38,329 people died of drug overdoses in the United States in 2010, an uptick from the previous year and the latest sign of a deadly trend involving prescription painkillers."

Statistics show about three-quarters of all prescription drug deaths were accidental.

Emergency visits

In addition to overdose deaths, there were 425,000 emergency department visits for misuse or abuse of opioids, including overdoses in 2013. This is up from 166,338 in 2004.

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Learn how to stay safe when using pain medication.

Your health and safety are important.

Use medication responsibly.



Innovate. Educate. Advocate.

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Medicine Resident and Student Association (AAEM/RSA)

Guide to Pain Medication

What you need to know



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American Academy of Emergency Medicine Resident Student Association aspires to a future in which all patients have unencumbered access to excellent emergency care provided by a board certified or board eligible emergency physician. Developing emergency physicians will receive the highest quality training in a supportive practice environment with an emphasis on personal wellness and career mentorship.

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What is pain?

Pain is a symptom that tells your brain something is wrong and can be caused by many things.

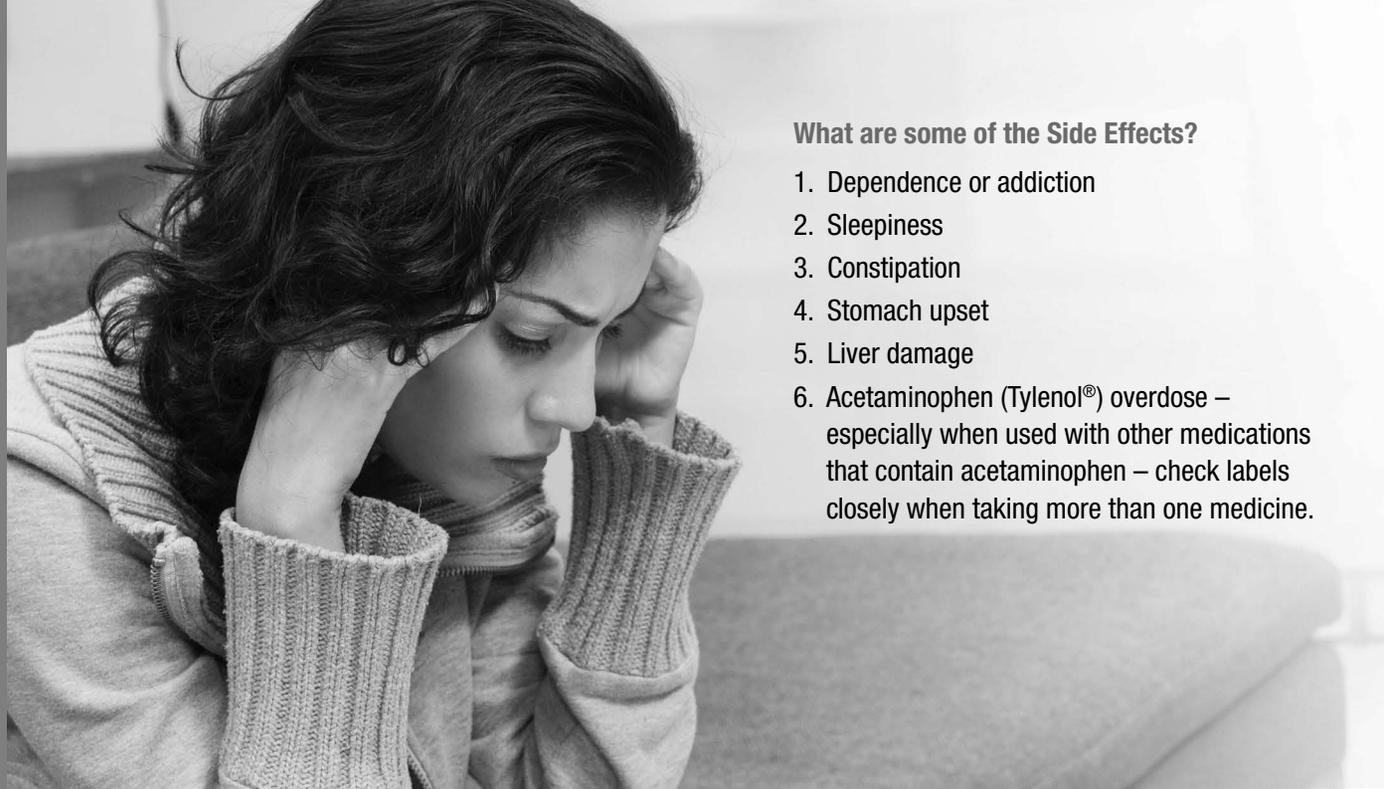
Finding out what is causing the pain is a very important step before taking pain medication.

Then, you and your doctor can work together to decide on the best and safest treatment.

Pain medication is not a cure for the cause of pain.

What is a painkiller?

A “painkiller” is generally a medication that is made of an opioid, which makes you less aware of pain, but does not cure the cause of pain. The opioid is usually mixed with another pain-reliever like acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Some examples are Vicodin®, Percocet®, Tramadol and Codeine.



What are some of the Side Effects?

1. Dependence or addiction
2. Sleepiness
3. Constipation
4. Stomach upset
5. Liver damage
6. Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) overdose – especially when used with other medications that contain acetaminophen – check labels closely when taking more than one medicine.

All pain medications, although helpful when needed, also come with serious risks



When should we use painkillers?

Pain medication may be prescribed by your doctor as a last resort option for **ongoing moderate to severe** pain. It should not be used for mild pain or for long periods of time, unless under the strict supervision of your *regular* physician, because of side effects. These side effects can cause other serious problems with your health.

There are other options...

Resources for Chronic Pain

The American Chronic Pain Association <http://theacpa.org/>
This website includes information on using opioids safely, pain management tools, and treatments and medications.

The American Academy of Pain Medicine <http://www.painmed.org>
Find information under the section titled “Patient Center.”