



The Crisis Not Discussed!

What are opioids? Do most of you even know? Have you ever had to take a few and what did you do with the rest of the unused pills? Did you see any side effects? Was your mood altered? What do you know about the opioid crisis on the street?

Opioids are drugs with pain relieving properties that are used to treat extreme and chronic pain. How do they work? You must be careful using them as they can become addicting.

Opioids can also induce euphoria (high feelings) which gives them great potential to be used by young people on or off the street, and are used improperly in many cases. Teens raid their parents medicine cabinets and begin the habit which then increases and requires more and more for the same effect.

Opioids is the general name of the prescribe medications; listed here codeine, fentanyl, morphine, oxycodone, hydromorphone, medical heroin. They can be produced legally or illegally, and can be obtained legally by prescription or illegally on the streets.

Opioids can also be produced and/or obtained illegally. Doctors may also sometimes prescribe them for other conditions, such as:

- acute (short-term) moderate to severe pain
- chronic (long-term) pain
- Moderate to severe cough
- moderate to severe diarrhea

Prescription opioid medications are available in various forms:

- Syrups, Tablets, Capsules, Nasal Sprays, Skin Patch
- Suppositories or Liquid Injections

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Needed Right Now !

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- [Volunteers--Call 365-880-0818](#)
- [Donate at www.JCsPlace.org](#)

How does one keep everything straight and in an organized manner, when the requests just keep on coming. "I need new accommodations"; "I need food"; "I need help with my finances"; "I need a listening ear"; "I need to find a way to start over again"; "I need a helping hand"; "I need a blanket"; "I need some clothes"; "I'm **5 months pregnant** and living in a tent, please help"; the list goes on and on in a never-ending fashion. How does one keep their sanity, when you are touched by each and every situation, that requires a special way of attention that the agencies are not offering.

I'm reminded of the bible story of the lady who touched the hem of the master's garment, he felt something drain from his being. It's a hard sensation to explain but by becoming personally involved with each situation, there is a draining of one's psychic that is a toll being taken little by little, and yet the requests still keep coming. Thankfully there are some success stories, a gentleman and his two sons relocated to better accommodations and less expensive, and then word gets around and you have other requests for help to find more accommodating housing.

As our weather turns colder and colder, degree by degree, the need for coats, sweat shirts, gloves, blankets, hats and all kinds of other winter clothing are requested on every corner. Yet our supplies are limited and we are not able to help everyone. So, if your closet contains some of the above items consider donating them to a better use than just hanging around doing nothing.

We will shortly have to turn our clocks back an hour and with the change comes the need for warm soup, I can tell you that a number of our unsheltered people have been requesting this hot treat for weeks already and on October 30th our first soup run, was done with two new volunteers Jim and Henry, who were initiated with the task of serving soup on their very first outing. Glad to report that this was a success and both men requested more duty time.

Our Sunday outings of late have been running out of food before completing the route. Seems to be more needs on the streets and our lunch count has gone from 35-40 to 70-75. We thankful for your past support and are asking you to consider a bit of an increase to support our growing numbers. Thank you with heartfelt thanks.

Received good news this past week, one of the warming and overnight shelters has again started up to shelter 30 persons from 7:30 pm to 7:30 am. 12 hours of warmth, and a place to sleep doesn't seem to be much but it is a step in the right direction, when homeless needs are exploding in our city. It is hard to believe that it has been 2 years now since Pam and I started ministering to those on the streets, first in a small way, which has now grown into JC's Place Ministries, and needs to continue to grow to meet the needs.

I was able to locate the man who was burnt out of his tent accommodation a few weeks back and he is fine but needs to start to replace everything that he has lost, from the basic items for health to the clothing he needs to survive this winter. He has relocated and hopefully will be more protected in this new location.

When I'm worn out, I spend much time in quiet, prayer, reading my Bible (the Word of God) and walking in nature, so all of the above revive my spirit and bouy me up.

The Crisis Not Discussed

You are likely to experience withdrawal symptoms when you lower your opioid dose quickly or you suddenly stop taking it. If you plan to reduce your dose, do it with help from a health care provider.

Problematic opioid use

Opioids have the potential for problematic use because they can produce euphoria (feeling high).

When people think about problematic opioid use, they often think about when someone takes an illegally produced or obtained opioid, such as:

- heroin
- Fentanyl

Problematic use of opioids also includes when you:

- use an opioid medicine improperly, such as:
 - taking more than is prescribed
 - taking it at the wrong time
 - use an opioid medicine that was not prescribed for you

Substance use disorder

When someone is affected by substance use disorder, or addiction, they crave the drug and continue using it despite the harmful effects. The drug becomes the focus of their feelings, thoughts and activities.

Opioid use disorder also changes the brain and the body in ways that can make it hard to stop using. This is because the body gets used to a regular supply of the drug. If you stop using the drug, or lower your dose quickly, you will likely experience withdrawal symptoms.

Physical withdrawal effects may include:

- * Chills
- * Diarrhea
- * Insomnia
- * Sweating
- * Body aches
- * Nervousness
- * Widespread or increased pain
- * Irritability and agitation
- * Nausea and stomach pain

The severity of withdrawal and how long it lasts depend on:

- how much drug was taken
- which opioid was used
- how long the drug was used

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If you have been prescribed an opioid medicine, it should:

- **Only** be taken as prescribed
- **Never** be used by someone for whom it was not prescribed
- **Never** be taken with alcohol or other medications (*except as prescribed*)

Keep your medication safe to help prevent problematic use by others, by:

- **Never** sharing your medication with anyone else
- This is illegal and may also cause serious harm or death to the other person
- Keeping track of the number of pills remaining in a package
- Storing drugs in a safe and secure place, out of the reach of children & teenagers

Unused portions of opioid medicine should always be:

- Kept out of sight and reach of children and pets
- Stored in a safe place to prevent theft, problematic use or accidental exposure
- Returned to a pharmacy for safe disposal if it is no longer needed or expired this prevents any possibility of illegal use and protects the environment

Short-term effects of opioids

The short-term side effects of using opioids may include:

- Drowsiness
- Constipation
- Impotence in men
- Nausea and vomiting
- Euphoria (feeling high)
- Difficulty breathing, which can lead to or worsen sleep apnea
- Headaches, dizziness and confusion, which can lead to falls and fractures

Long-term effects of opioids

The longer-term side effects of using opioids may include:

- Increased tolerance
- Substance-use disorder or dependence
- Liver damage
- Infertility in women
- Worsening pain (known as "opioid-induced hyperalgesia")
- Life-threatening withdrawal symptoms in babies born to mothers taking opioids

Even when prescribed to treat a specific condition or pain, there are serious side effects and risks of using opioids, including:

- Physical dependence
- Substance use disorder
- Overdose

If you have been taking opioids for a period of time, your body becomes accustomed to or tolerant to this opioid dose. You may require increasing amounts of the opioid to get the same effect. If you stop taking the drug for a few days and then start taking the drug at the same dose you were used to, it may increase chances of an overdose. Because you lose tolerance to the medication when stopping it, even for a few days.

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Substance use disorder treatment may include:

- Counselling and support
- Detoxification (managing withdrawal)
- Medication-assisted treatment

Assisted treatment involves a prescribed opioid medication such as:

- Methadone
- Buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone and its generic forms)

Help for substance use disorder

Help is available whether you need it for yourself, a friend or a family member. You can also contact your health care provider for help with substance use disorder.

Overdose

An overdose can happen when you take too much of an opioid. Opioids affect the part of your brain that controls your breathing. When you take more opioids than your body can handle, your breathing slows. This can lead to unconsciousness and even death.

You are at risk of an overdose if you take:

- An opioid not prescribed for you
- A higher opioid dose than prescribed for you
- Illegally produced or obtained drugs that may contain opioids
- An opioid with alcohol
- An opioid with other depressant drugs including:
 - Sleeping pills (benzodiazepines)
 - Anxiety medication
 - Muscle relaxants

Other health risks of using opioids

Needles

Some people inject opioids with a needle.

If you share needles with others you have a higher chance of getting infected with viruses like the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or hepatitis C.

You can permanently harm your veins and organs by injecting drugs.

Pregnancy

There is an increased risk of premature delivery for women who use opioids regularly, including prescription opioids. There is also a risk the baby may be born with life-threatening withdrawal symptoms.

So What is the Problem?

In the Niagara Region . . .

- Fentanyl was the most common type of opioid present at the time of death (present in 92% of deaths), followed by methadone (present in 14% of deaths)
- In 2020, there were a total of 149 confirmed opioid-related deaths. This is approximately 13 deaths per month.
- Fentanyl was the most common type of opioid present at the time of death (present in 83% of deaths), followed by methadone (present in 15% of deaths) *Continued Page 6*

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Fentanyl is an addictive synthetic opioid that is used as an anesthetic and for severe pain management

It is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 40 times more than heroin

At the core of the issue is Fentanyl is being added into other drugs (for example, cocaine), and is increasing the overdose/death rate of users

Health Canada estimates that a lethal dose of pure Fentanyl for a typical adult is as little as two milligrams, (not very much) which is approximately the **size of a few grains of table salt**

Please visit the Niagara Region overdose prevention webpage for more information.

So, what is the real problem? The situation is **“OUT OF CONTROL”**. The numbers of overdoses are escalating, as noted in the above statistics. There has been a 45% increase in the number of naloxone kits (medication used to block the effects of opioids) that were used this year so far but the death rate continues to climb. Tainted heroin is coming into the Niagara Region, creating a terrible and risky state of affairs. According to the coroner’s office, Niagara had the second highest death rate in the province from opioid overdoses.

According to Niagara Emergency Medical Services from January to March 2021 there were 203 suspected opioid overdoses that EMS responded to in (3 months) In all of 2020 there were 625 overdoses handled by EMS. Most are males and most are in the age bracket of 24-44. On the street people have no idea of what they’re getting... there is **no quality control**. Most cases of overdose are not reported. Fear of police arrest, a criminal record and potential incarceration. **Where is the answer ? ? ?**

Ways to Give:

- 1. Electronically . . . Wwww.jcsPlace.org**
- 2. Mail . . . JC’s Place 2408 Smithville Road Smithville L0R 2A0**
- 3. Phone . . . 905-975-6394 or 365-880-7229**



JC's Place Ministries

a mobile ministry of the Niagara Falls Seventh-day Adventist Church

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