

# Opiate Induced Anxiety and Other Symptoms

## EHC Patient Education Module

Opiates are substances that depress the central nervous system, slow down body functioning, and, when used short term, reduce physical and psychological pain. While many prescription opioid narcotics are used in the manner in which they were intended for the short duration prescribed without problems, certain individuals, for various reasons, may become addicted to opiates.

Prescription opioids are highly addictive and prolonged use can produce neurological changes and physiological dependence.

Non-medical opioid use has been associated with the incidence of any mood disorder, major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder and **all anxiety disorders**.

The initial, rewarding effects of drugs of abuse are followed by the emergence of a negative emotional state each time a drug is experienced. **Anxiety** during opiate withdrawal occurs in response to changes in activity of the mesolimbic dopamine system.

Negative emotional symptoms of withdrawal are therefore an intrinsic component of daily drug exposure and likely contribute to the development of dependence. Negative affective symptoms, such as **anxiety** and dysphoria, are a common consequence of withdrawal from drugs of abuse that occur after each drug exposure.

Additionally, there is a cascade of symptoms that is caused by opiate addiction. While not all individuals struggling with opiate addiction will display all of the symptoms, the most common symptoms of opiate addiction are:

### Mood symptoms:

Mood swings	Irritability
Depression	Euphoric mood for a few hours
<b>Anxiety</b>	

### Behavioral symptoms:

Forging prescriptions for opiates	Restlessness
Stealing narcotics from friends and family	Social isolation
Lethargy	Lying to others to cover the amount of drug taken
Withdrawing from once-pleasurable activities	Not fulfilling familial and other responsibilities
Decreased performance at job or school	Robbing pharmacies and other medication dispensaries
Preoccupation with obtaining, using, and recovering from usage of opiates	

### Physical symptoms:

Exhaustion	Muscle spasms
Pain relief	Insomnia
Respiratory depression	Constipation
Sedation	Nausea
Vomiting	Vomiting
Itching	Sweating
Coma	Death

### Psychological symptoms:

Addiction	Paranoia
Memory problems	Worsening of mental health
Hallucinations	Decrease in emotional well-being
Delusions	Increase in symptoms of mental illness

### Effects

The effects of opiate addiction can be far-reaching and devastating to all involved. Not a single part of a person's life goes unscathed by the narcotic. Some of the most common effects of opiate abuse include:

Job loss	Bleeding ulcers
Incarceration	Child abuse
Divorce	Homelessness
Domestic abuse	Financial ruin
Liver damage	Kidney damage
Damage to major organs	Damage to brain structure and functioning
Seizures	Damage to memory formation
Overdose	Seizures
Coma	Death