

# Safe Use of Medications



- Take your medication as it was prescribed (number per day, time of day, with or without food, etc.).



- If you have more than one doctor or pharmacy, make sure they all know what medications you are taking and how much of each. Using the same pharmacy allows the pharmacist to stay up to date on your prescriptions.



- Let your doctor(s)/pharmacy know if you are taking any vitamins, supplements, or over-the-counter medications.



- Keep all medications in a safe place, out of sight and out of reach of children and animals.



- Talk with your doctor(s) before changing or stopping any medications. If you are not feeling right or are noticing side effects that worry you, speak to your doctor or pharmacist right away.



- Do not take medication prescribed to someone else; only take your own.



- Dispose of medications that are expired, or no longer needed at a prescription drug drop box or at your local police department.

- Visit [www.healthyacadia.org](http://www.healthyacadia.org) for drop box locations.

# Opioid Safety Precautions

Opioid painkillers such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and others, may be prescribed for moderate or severe pain. Others such as codeine are used to help stop coughing. Opioids work on our central nervous system, which is made up of the brain and spinal cord. Not only can opioids subdue pain impulses, they can also suppress breathing. Opioids are highly addictive, should be used sparingly, and avoided if possible.



## Special care should be when taking opioid-based medications:

- Never take an opioid medication that is not prescribed to you.
- Do not change or adjust your doses without talking to your doctor first.
- Do not take opioids with any of the following herbal substances or products that contain them: kava kava, valerian, or St. John's wort; these could increase sedation effects.
- Taking any sleep aids, anti-anxiety medications (such as benzodiazepines), or alcohol with opioid medications can be deadly.
- Keep track of when you take your medications.
- Remember, opioids can be highly addictive. If you are concerned about your use of opioids or that of a loved one, talk with your doctor and visit [www.healthyacadia.org](http://www.healthyacadia.org) for resources that can help.