Communities in the United States are in the midst of an opioid epidemic. Opioid overdose deaths have risen nationwide for more than a decade. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Arm your family and community with knowledge about opioids so that you can manage pain safely.

WHAT IS AN OPIOID?
• A class of drugs that may be legal (prescription painkillers such as Vicodin, OxyContin, and Percocet) or illegal (heroin)
• The drug attaches to “opioid receptors” on nerve cells in the brain and body
• This stops the body from sending pain signals to the brain
• Because opioids also produce euphoria, users can become addicted
• Misused, opioids may cause overdose and death

THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC BY THE NUMBERS IN 2016

- 64,000 people died of drug overdose in the U.S.
- 66% (42,249) of the drug deaths were due to an opioid
- U.S. makes up 5% of world population, consumes 80% of opioids and 99% of hydrocodone
- Overdose deaths surpass deaths from car accidents
- 116 people died every day from opioid-related drug overdose
- 2.1 million people misused prescription opioids for the first time
- Each day, 1,000 people are treated in emergency departments for opioid misuse
- 504 billion in economic costs
- Opioids can be addictive even if only taken for a short period of time

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