



If you recognise any of these signs

 **Never suddenly stop taking your medication, this can be extremely dangerous!**

 **Contact a pharmacist or GP at the practice to talk about how to gradually reduce your dose and learn about alternative ways to manage your pain**

Please get in touch if you have any questions

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Opioid Medication



Dukinfield Medical Practice

What are Opioids?

Opioids are the strongest pain killers we can prescribe.

They include mild opioids like Codeine and Tramadol, as well as strong opioids like morphine, oxycodone, buprenorphine, and fentanyl.

What are they used for?

Opiate medications are only useful as a short-term measure to help combat acute severe pain like after an operation or a serious injury.

What are the risks of Opioid use?

Addiction Long time use can cause physical dependence on the drug leading to withdrawal symptoms when trying to stop using it

Overdose This can cause respiratory depression, which can lead to death if the dosage is too high

Tolerance Over time the body becomes less responsive to these drugs needing higher doses to achieve the same effect and eventually they lose their effect

Side effects Dizziness, nausea, constipation, and drowsiness which affect a person's ability to drive or operate machinery safely

Interactions with other drugs Opiate medications can interact with prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs, and illegal drugs

Withdrawal symptoms can be uncomfortable and cause relapse

How to recognise Opioid Dependence?

- ◇ Taking the medication for more than 3 months
- ◇ Regularly taking the maximum dose or higher
- ◇ You do not feel like yourself
- ◇ Experiencing unpleasant side effects or withdrawal symptoms when you miss or reduce your dose
- ◇ You watch the clock, waiting until you can take your next dose
- ◇ Does the thought of missing one dose cause anxiety?
- ◇ You might be buying it illegally or taking medication that has been prescribed to others
- ◇ You visit different doctors or pharmacists to try and get extra medication
- ◇ You get angry or upset when someone mentions how much medication you're taking or how often you're taking it.