

## OPIOIDS

Opioids are medications that relieve pain. They reduce the intensity of pain signals reaching the brain and affect those brain areas controlling emotion, which diminishes the effects of a painful stimulus. Medications that fall within this class include hydrocodone (e.g., Vicodin), oxycodone (e.g., OxyContin, Percocet), morphine (e.g., Kadian, Avinza), codeine, and related drugs.



### EFFECTS

Opioids act by attaching to specific proteins called opioid receptors, which are found in the brain, spinal cord, gastrointestinal tract, and other organs in the body. When these drugs attach to their receptors, they reduce the perception of pain. Opioids can also produce drowsiness, mental confusion, nausea, constipation, and, depending upon the amount of drug taken, can depress respiration. Some people experience a euphoric response to opioid medications, since these drugs also affect the brain regions involved in reward. Medical complications, including overdose, physical dependence and even addiction to opioids, can develop with long term use.



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**DEPARTMENT OF  
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School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation  
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The Indiana Prevention Resource Center is operated by the Department of Applied Health Science, School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Indiana University. Funded, in part, by a contract with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, financially supported through Health and Human Services/Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

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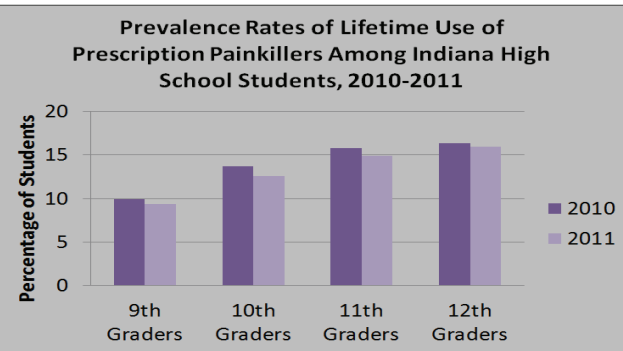
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## INCIDENCE & PREVALENCE

The nonmedical use of pharmaceuticals has been on the rise in recent years. According to SAMHSA's Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) 2010 estimates, pain relievers were the most common type of drugs reported in the nonmedical use category of emergency department visits (47.8%). Among specific types of pain relievers, higher levels were seen for the narcotic pain relievers oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone (13.7%, 8.0%, and 5.8%, respectively). Drugs used to treat anxiety and insomnia were also seen frequently (33.6%) in visits related to non-medical use of pharmaceuticals. Among Indiana high school students there has been a decrease in lifetime use of prescription painkillers from 2010 to 2011.



Source: IPRC 2011 ATOD Use By Children & Adolescents Survey\*

## LAW & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

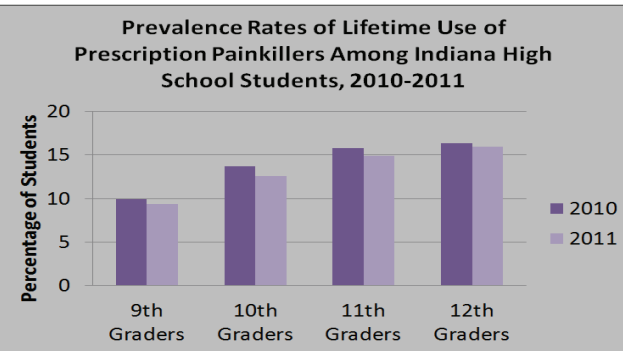
Oxycodone, Morphine, and Hydromorphone, and Hydrocodone products, are classified as Schedule II controlled substances by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration under the Controlled Substance Act of 1970. They have legitimate medicinal uses but are potentially susceptible to abuse and could produce dependency. In response to the growing abuse of opioid products and other pharmaceutical drugs, the state of Indiana has implemented prescription monitoring programs to detect suspicious prescriptions and those who are involved in doctor shopping, where individuals visit many doctors in order to obtain large amounts of the drug.

### Indiana Prevention Resource Center

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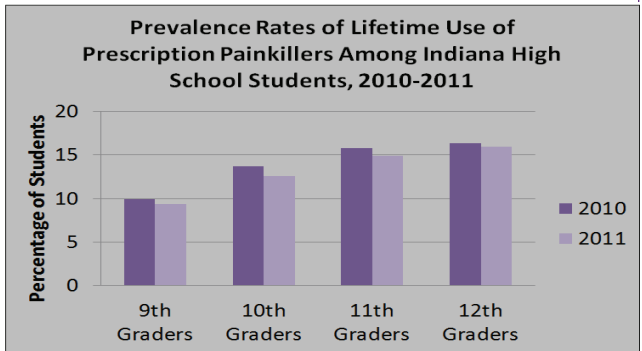
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