

Nurses' Nook... Tips to Prevent Addiction:

Virtually nobody wakes up in the morning and thinks he or she will try taking [heroin](#) today because it is a good idea. Remember that most persons (~80%) that become addicted to narcotics start with misuse of prescription medication. Eventually heroin and [fentanyl](#) become a less expensive way to feed the ever consuming addiction.

Data show that the younger a person is when he or she starts using addictive substances (including alcohol) the more likely he or she is to become addicted, so putting off use of these substances can contribute to long-term health. There is something about the undeveloped mind of the young adult that predisposes it to the addictive properties of these substances.

One way to help prevent future addiction is to be extra vigilant even when using prescribed medication for pain relief. These recommendations (which are worthy of reprinting) are from Daniel Muse, MD, an emergency physician at Brockton Hospital and a Fellow of the American Academy of Emergency Medicine who works with the drug task force in Brockton. These are for when and if your child needs some type of medical intervention that has been generally thought of as painful:

- Narcotic pain relievers should NOT be the primary source of pain relief
- Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), naproxen (Aleve), and acetaminophen (Tylenol) should be utilized first
- Immobilization, ice, elevation, and rest will help relieve pain
- IF your child is prescribed a narcotic pain reliever it should be for NO MORE than 3 days and NO MORE than 3 times per day
- In addition parents should receive education from the prescriber about narcotics:
 - Addiction potential
 - Risk of mixing
 - Warning about driving
 - How to store and dispose of narcotics

Please keep these recommendations in mind and have a conversation with your own health care provider about narcotic pain relievers if these are prescribed for your child.

Remember ALL the nurses in the district have medication disposal packets available for you for FREE so that you can safely dispose of any leftover medications in your home. In addition you can generally take them to your local police station for safe disposal.

Please do feel free to contact the nurse in your child's school with any questions.