

Prevent impairment from opioids



Opioids can impair your mental and physical functioning, impacting your ability to work safely. Though it can be difficult to identify when impairment is caused by opioids – because it can look similar to impairment caused by alcohol, other drug use, fatigue and more – watch for these symptoms:

- Reduced capacity to concentrate, think clearly, evaluate situations and make appropriate decisions in a timely manner
- Decreased motor coordination and sensory perception, slower reaction time
- Personality changes, mood changes or irritability
- Sleepiness, nausea and dizziness

Remember, these are signs and symptoms that can be caused by more than one situation. Avoid jumping to conclusions about why someone is acting differently. If someone is acting differently, follow workplace protocols (notifying a supervisor, etc.) who will address the situation via approved workplace protocols to keep the workplace safe and get the person the support they need.

Since being impaired can create hazards for yourself and others in your workplace, it is crucial to be proactive about these risks. To help prevent impairment-related incidents in the workplace:

- Stay aware of when you may be impaired as a result of taking impairing medications or starting new prescriptions with impairing side effects
- Notify appropriate personnel of your potential impairment
- Talk to your doctor about your workplace safety considerations before starting new medications and discuss any potential risks from side effects
- Ask your doctor about alternatives or limiting opioid prescriptions

