



OPIOIDS AND THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

HIJACKING BRAINS, DESTROYING LIVES

OPIOIDS DAMAGE BRAINS AND SHATTER FUTURES.

Research into the effect of opioids on the young brain is relatively recent and, as a result, there is still a lot of uncertainty about how these drugs affect the teen mind. However, there is increasing evidence that using opioids as a young person can contribute to long-lasting changes in brain development. These changes have a number of long-term negative impacts on brain health and overall well-being.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Initial evidence suggests the following possible impacts:

Addiction: Increased likelihood of developing addiction in adulthood

Brain function: Disruption in the activity of certain brain cells that can lead to brain disorder

Cognitive dysfunction: Deficits in attention, verbal and non-verbal learning, etc.

Mental health: Greater chance of anxiety and depression

WHO'S AT RISK?

Anyone can suffer from misusing opioids, but some people are more likely than others to experience misuse or addiction. Young adults who are most at risk are those who have suffered trauma, such as sexual abuse; those who have mental health issues; and those who do not have strong connections to family or their community.





**14% OF
STUDENTS
REPORTED
MISUSING
PRESCRIPTION
OPIOIDS**

HOW TO MINIMIZE RISK

- Community engagement
- Participation in activities
- Stable family environment
- Parental involvement
- School support
- Awareness of dangers of misusing opioids

HOW TO HELP

The best way to avoid the negative impacts of opioids on the young brain is to avoid using. The first step is talking and learning about the risk of using opioids and what they can do to a developing mind. If use is an issue, there are many places to get help, including:

**National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
or www.findtreatment.gov**

**A MIND UNDER SIEGE:
OPIOIDS UNDERMINE BRAIN
FUNCTION.**