

# What are you risking?

## Associated Health Risks

- Weight loss
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Increased blood pressure
- Respiratory problems
- Seizure
- Stroke
- Heart failure
- Death

## Associated Emotional Consequences

- Social withdrawal
- Alienation of family & friends
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Impulsive Behavior
- Aggression
- Violence

Medications can be effective when they are used properly but can be as addictive or more dangerous as illegal street drugs when misused.



If you or someone you love are addicted to prescription drugs, there are many ways to get help. To hear about treatment options, recovery meetings, and other information on addiction, call the **West Virginia Prescription Drug Abuse Quitline** at **1-866-987-8488** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Phone educators are waiting to help you.

West Virginia University  
Dept. of Community Medicine  
P.O. Box 9190  
Morgantown, WV 26506

Phone: 1-866-WV-QUITT  
Website: [www.wvrxabuse.org](http://www.wvrxabuse.org)



## Prescription Drug Abuse

and Rural Life

**WEST VIRGINIA PRESCRIPTION  
DRUG ABUSE QUITLINE**

Toll-free: 1-866-WV-QUITT  
24 hours, 7 days a week

# What is Addiction?

Addiction is a physical, psychological, and social problem. Physically, addiction results in needing increasing amounts to get the same effect, withdrawal, cravings and changes in sleep patterns.

Psychological affects include a reliance on the drug to make you feel good or cope with stressors.

Using can also create mood swings ranging from euphoria to severe irritability. Socially, using causes less frequent contact with important people, frequently missed appointments, or an inability to participate in important events due to drug use.

**Physical Addiction:** Thousands of people use prescription medicines to help ease pain from common ailments (such as headaches and backaches) or to recover after surgery or illness. Commonly prescribed drugs such as opioids, depressants, stimulants, and antidepressants can also lead to chemical dependency. Addicts say they need these meds just to “feel normal.”

**Psychological Addiction:** Life today is very stressful. Many people experience emotional problems and need help to deal with them. There are appropriate ways of coping with attention problems, stress, anxiety, and depression. However, when individuals feel they must have prescription drugs to make it through the day, this is a sign of psychological addiction. Taking these medications without being monitored by a doctor can be very dangerous.

**There are different levels of addiction.** At one end of the spectrum is someone who can not function as a result of their addiction. This person has to use drugs everyday. There is a good chance that they may have lost their job, important relationships, and/or financial stability.

A more common picture of prescription drug abuse is a functioning addict. This person can probably still work and their relationships are relatively intact, but their life is suffering because of their addiction. Addiction is not always easily detected.

**The consequences of addiction get worse over time.** Addiction is a progressive disease. It is never easy to quit, but if you have already suffered negative consequences due to prescription drug abuse and don't want to suffer more, there's never a better time to quit than now.

## Your Job

If you work in a coal mine or at another job that includes dangerous work and heavy labor, you are at a greater risk for job-related injuries. You are also at a greater risk for misusing or abusing prescription drugs.

Although drugs like Percocet, Lortab, and Oxycontin can legitimately manage your pain, becoming dependent upon opioids like these can result in terrible consequences, including death.

In fact, from 1999-2004, deaths from drug overdoses rose 550% in West Virginia, more than any other state in the country.

Dangerous occupations combined with prescription drug misuse or abuse is unsafe and can put many lives at stake.