

Keep the Ball in Your Court. KNOW THE RISKS.

Preventing Opioid Misuse among High School Student-Athletes

What is prescription pain reliever misuse? As defined by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, it's "use without a prescription of one's own or use at a higher dosage or more often than prescribed."

As you probably know, prescription opioid addiction – stemming from misuse – has hit the nation hard in recent years. An estimated **3.2 million Americans** (over the age of 12) are currently misusing pain relievers. Among 12 to 25 year olds, **848,000** are current misusers. Unfortunately, high school student-athletes can be especially vulnerable to prescription painkiller misuse. The pain relief, an eagerness to return to the field after injury, and the belief that such medication is "safe" because they're prescribed by a doctor, are just a few reasons why.

Five tips for parents and educators to help keep your student-athlete from misusing painkillers:

- 1 Encourage the student-athlete to rest and heal.**
- 2 Know the signs of opioid misuse.**
- 3 Monitor the use of opioid medications.**
- 4 Properly dispose of opioid medications.**
- 5 Consider alternative pain therapies.**

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