



Stakeholder Kit

Caring for someone living with pain and taking opioids: information for carers

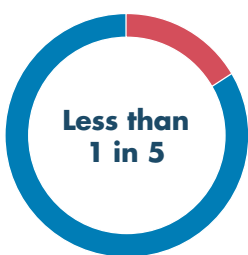


Introduction

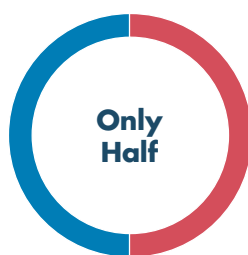
The use of opioid medicines has been increasing in Australia.

Opioids are strong pain medication. They can be prescribed following a surgery or injury, for specific medical conditions, as well as in cancer treatment and palliative care.

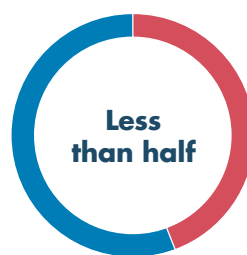
However, a recent study in Australia showed there's a lack of knowledge about opioids:



Less than 1 in 5 people using opioids take them in a safe and effective way.



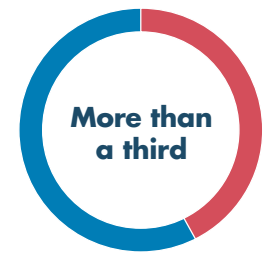
Only half of current opioid users knew they were taking an opioid medication.



Less than half knew all of their current opioid medications were opioids.



Less than 1 in 3 people look for information about opioids after they are prescribed.



More than a third of Australians do not know what opioids are.

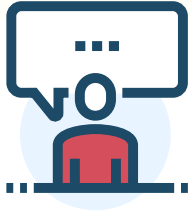
Every day in Australia, an average of 3 people die, 150 people are hospitalised and 14 people present to emergency departments because of harm from opioids.

That's why the Australian Government has brought in new measures to reduce opioid use, including:

- Additional smaller pack sizes for short-term pain
- Information and clear warnings about potential harm
- Tightening of conditions to get prescriptions for opioids

Carers Australia has worked with the Australian Government Department of Health to produce a series of resources to help unpaid carers better understand opioids to combat low opioid literacy and improve confidence.

With the right information, carers can support their loved ones to take their opioid medicines safely and explore alternative treatments for pain.



Help Us Spread The Message

There are almost **2.65 million Australians** who care for someone with disability, a medical condition, mental health condition or someone who is frail due to age. That's **1 in 8 Australians**. Of the total number of Australian carers, **235,000 are under the age of 25**.

One of the responsibilities of being a carer may be accompanying the care recipient to healthcare and medical appointments, or managing their medication.

Carers may meet with, and seek the advice of, clinicians, doctors, allied health professionals and other healthcare professionals as part of their caring role. They may even connect with peak organisations to learn more about the condition of the person they care for and seek support.

This is why we are seeking your support in promoting our opioid awareness campaign to all unpaid carers.

In this kit, you will find materials and content to use on your website, social media channels and within newsletters.

Together we can help carers become aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access it.



Promotional Materials

Carers Australia has created a range of free promotional materials to help carers learn more about opioids and pain management.

Our factsheets and checklist can be downloaded from our dedicated [opioid information webpage](#).

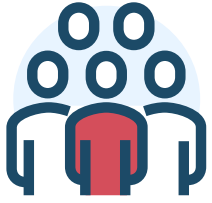
Factsheets:

- [Factsheet One - How do I know if the person I'm caring for is taking opioid medication?](#)
- [Factsheet Two - How can I support the person I'm caring for with taking their opioid medication?](#)
- [Factsheet Three - How can I identify if a person I'm caring for is not using their opioid medicine safely, and what can I do to help?](#)
- [Factsheet Four - Will the person I'm caring for still have access to opioid medicines?](#)
- [Factsheet Five - How can I help someone living with pain](#)

Checklist:

Doctors and pharmacists should be happy to answer any questions carers may have about opioids. Carers Australia has created a checklist to help carers facilitate these discussions.

- [Checklist - Are you a carer for someone living with pain? Do you want to learn more about their opioid pain medication?](#)



Social Media Messages

Use the text below to distribute messages about Carers Australia's opioid messaging and the resources available to carers through your own social media platforms.

Facebook:

1. Do you know if your loved one is taking opioid medication to manage a short-term or chronic pain condition? Get the facts about opioids by heading to Carers Australia's dedicated opioid resource page.

They've created a series of resources, including factsheets, videos and checklists to help empower carers to learn more about opioids and speak with their loved ones and medical professionals about pain management. <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/opioids-information/caring-for-someone-living-with-pain/>

2. Opioids are strong pain medication. They can be prescribed following a surgery or injury, for specific medical conditions, as well as in cancer treatment and palliative care. However, a recent study in Australia showed there's a lack of knowledge about opioids.

If you're an unpaid carer caring for someone who takes opioid medication, you can learn more about pain management and opioid medication by heading to Carers Australia's dedicated opioid webpage: <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/opioids-information/caring-for-someone-living-with-pain/>

Twitter:

1. As a carer, you might help your loved one in a variety of ways including managing their medication. If the person you care for takes opioids, it's important you understand how they can safely take their medication. Head to Carers Australia's opioid webpage to learn more: <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/opioids-information/caring-for-someone-living-with-pain/>
2. Carers Australia has created series of resources to help carers strengthen their understanding of opioids and increase their confidence in discussing the medication with medical professionals and their loved ones. Learn more here: <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/opioids-information/caring-for-someone-living-with-pain/>



Newsletter Or Website Content

People who care for a family member or friend living with long-term pain play a vital role in making sure their loved one's pain is managed correctly.

As a carer, you might help the person you care for in a variety of ways, including managing their medication. This may include opioids.

Opioids are strong and effective pain medicines when used as directed by the doctor. But, opioids can come with a risk of harm, can cause side-effects, increase sensitivity to pain and may be addictive if used long-term.

Every day in Australia, an average of **3** people die, **150** people are hospitalised and **14** people present to emergency departments because of harm from opioids.

If the person you care for is taking opioid medication, it's important that you understand the facts about opioids and how you can support your loved one to take their medication safely.

Carers Australia has created a series of resources to help carers strengthen their understanding of opioids and increase their confidence in discussing the medication with medical professionals. On their [dedicated opioid webpage](#), you can find information, factsheets, checklists and links to support services about opioids and pain management.

Remember! Seek support from your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about how to help someone take their opioid medicines.

Carers can also find support in their caring role by visiting the [Carer Gateway website](#) or by calling **1800 422 737**.



Further Information

For Carers:

Visit the Carer Gateway website at www.carergateway.gov.au or call them on **1800 422 737** to find local services and support.

The Carer Gateway makes it easier for carers to find help, including counselling, peer support, respite care, home help and equipment.

For Opioid Information:

Carers can seek support from their doctor or pharmacist if they have any questions about how to help someone take their opioid medicines.

Alternatively, carers can get more information about taking opioids safely by calling Medicine Line: **1300 633 424 (1300 MEDICINE)** - Monday to Friday 9-5 AEST.

Further information is available from:

- [Healthdirect](#)
- [Opioid Risk Indicator](#)
- [Pain Australia](#)
- [NPS MedicineWise](#)
- [Chronic Pain Australia](#)
- [Australian Pain Management Association](#)
- [Pain Link Helpline](#)
- [ScriptWise](#)
- [Australian Indigenous Health](#)

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia's unpaid carers, advocating on their behalf to influence policies and services at a national level.

Our vision is an Australia that values and supports the contribution that carers make both to the people they care for and to the community as a whole.