



Opioid Painkiller Overdose Cause Thousands of Deaths Each Year

Patients who are prescribed [opioid painkillers](#) to treat chronic or severe pain may be at risk of poisoning or overdose due to the irresponsible way these drugs are sometimes handed out by doctors.

Over the last decade, prescriptions for opioid painkillers have tripled. This, in turn, has led to an increase in the numbers of deaths caused by these drugs.

In 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and prevention revealed that nearly 14,000 patients in the U.S. died that year as a result of poisoning or overdose caused by the use of [prescription painkillers](#), more than twice the number of annual deaths just a decade before.

Some of the most commonly prescribed opioid painkillers include Vicodin (which is sold generically under the name hydrocodone), OxyContin (sold generically as oxycodone), Dilaudid (sold generically under the name Hydromorphone), methadone, and the Duragesic fentanyl pain patch (which is sold generically under several names including Sandoz, Watson and Mylan).

Although these drugs can play an important role in treating some patients with pain, when they are not properly prescribed by a physician, painkillers can put the health and even the life of a patient at risk.

Some physicians place patients on high doses of painkillers when it is unnecessary, placing them at risk of an overdose.

In other cases, patients are treated with these drugs for longer than necessary, increasing the likelihood that they may become addicted.

Many times, patients are not a proper candidate for a particular opioid painkiller, but it is prescribed to them any way, or they suffer from other conditions such as sleep apnea and pulmonary problems which make the use of opioid painkillers very dangerous.

Patients who are switched from one powerful painkiller to another by their doctor—a practice known as opioid rotation—may also face serious health risks, either from an interaction between the two drugs, or because the new medication is much stronger than the old one.

Although state lawmakers and federal health officials have passed new laws to try and curb the epidemic of painkiller overdoses, many doctors continue to prescribe these medications in excessive doses, jeopardizing the lives of their patients.

If you or a loved one has been the victim of an [overdose or other serious complications](#) caused by opioid overprescription, you may be eligible to file a lawsuit against the doctor or hospital that was responsible for your injuries.

Although strong opioid painkillers are frequently prescribed by pain specialists with experience in administering these drugs to patients, general practitioners and other doctors with little to no training in administering the strongest painkillers routinely give these drugs to their patients.

Studies have found that most doctors who are not pain specialists have trouble administering a correct dose of painkillers to their patients. When these errors result in overdose or death, the doctor or hospital may be at fault.

The lawyers at Heygood, Orr & Pearson are among the nation's leaders in handling [cases involving potent opioids](#), and our law firm has the experience to prosecute medical malpractice cases involving a wide array of serious opioid painkillers, including Vicodin and hydrocodone, OxyContin and oxycodone, methadone, hydromorphone, Fentanyl, and others.

To receive a free legal consultation and find out if you are eligible to file a case, please call our toll-free hotline at 1-877-446-9001, or by sending us an email at info@hop-law.com.

For more information about our firm and our experience in handling cases involving medical malpractice and painkiller overdose, visit us online by going to <http://www.hop-law.com/>.