

THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



INFANCY/PRESCHOOL



EVERY
15 MIN

a baby is born with
Neonatal Opioid
Withdrawal Syndrome
(NOWS) (CDC)

From 2004 to 2014

↑ 433%

increase in the
incidence of NOWS

OPIOID MISUSE DURING PREGNANCY: RISKS TO THE NEWBORN

1. Signs of opioid withdrawal following birth include:

- Sleep wake cycle disturbances.
- Muscle tone difficulties
- Tremors or jitteriness
- Sweating,
- Sneezing, nasal stuffiness
- A mottled appearance
- Frequent yawning
- Fever
- Irritability and crying with any stimuli
- Feeding difficulties resulting in poor weight gain.
- Irregular respiration
- Gastrointestinal problems

2. Opioid misuse during pregnancy: Risks to the baby:

- Preterm birth
- Low birth weight
- Developmental delay
- Behavioral and cognitive concerns
- Motor problems
- Craniofacial defects
- Problems with the eyes and vision

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



1 IN 8

US children live in a household with at least

1 PARENT

suffering from a substance use disorder

1 IN 35

US children live in a household with at least

1 PARENT

suffering from an illicit drug use disorder, including opioid use

OPIOID SUBSTANCE USE IN THE HOME: RISKS TO CHILDREN

1. Impaired parenting and attachment which may result in:

- Physical or emotional neglect and inadequate supervision
- Medical neglect
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Physical or sexual abuse

2. Extended separation of the child from parents due to:

- Parental incarceration
- Residential psychiatric or drug treatment
- Parental death due to overdose
- Placement in foster care

3. Impaired brain development due to exposure to toxic stress during critical periods of brain development.

ADOLESCENCE



14% OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

report having used select illicit or injection drugs including opiates

Injection drug use places teens at direct risk for HIV

Drug use broadly places teens at increased risk of overdose

OPIOID SUBSTANCE ABUSE: RISKS TO TEENS

1. Risk factors for teen drug use include:

- Family history of substance use
- Favorable parental attitudes towards substance use
- Poor parental monitoring
- Family rejection of sexual orientation or gender identity
- Association with delinquent or substance using peers
- Lack of school connectedness
- Low academic achievement
- Childhood sexual abuse
- Mental health concerns

2. Impact on teens:

- Affects brain development
- Associated with other risky behaviors, such as unprotected sex and dangerous driving.
- Contributes to the development of adult health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep disorders
- Increases risk for being a victim of physical or sexual dating violence.
- Associated exposure to violence
- Increased risk for developing mental health and suicidal concerns

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