

DO YOU KNOW YOUR MEDS?

CODEINE

Codeine is an opioid pain medication. It is metabolised to morphine in the body.

Products such as Nurofen Plus, Panadeine Forte and some cold and flu tablets that contain codeine are often used to relieve moderate to severe pain, and are usually safe in low doses or if taken for short periods.

In addition to codeine, these products contain other ingredients which can also harm the body.

Long term use can lead to stomach ulcers, internal bleeding, kidney disease and heart disease. Higher doses can be very dangerous and cause liver disease and kidney failure.

What are the risks of using codeine?

Dependence and addiction. When you use medicines containing codeine long-term, it is possible to become addicted without realising it.

You, or a family member, may not be aware that these medications can be harmful to your health. You may have tried to cut back or to stop taking the medication, but have been unable to. This may be a sign you have become addicted to codeine

When you stop using codeine, there can be **withdrawal symptoms such as head and muscle aches, mood swings, insomnia, nausea and diarrhoea.**

Opioid pain medication overuse or dependence can be treated by your doctor.

Did you know? Research shows codeine is ineffective in the treatment of chronic pain at the low dose used in over-the-counter medications.



Codeine dependency doesn't discriminate. It can happen to you, or a family member.

Codeine toxicity was involved in the deaths of over 1,400 Australians between 2000-2013

How do I seek help?

- + **Talk to your GP and pharmacist.** Ask them about alternative medications, non-medicine treatment for pain management or even opiate substitution treatment, if you feel you might be dependent.
- + If you think you, or a family member might be affected, please contact the **Alcohol and Drug Support Line on (08) 9442 5000, available 24 hours**



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