

# PULSE CHECK: HEALTH OPINIONS & BEHAVIORS IN AMERICA



One of the most pressing health issues of our time, the opioid epidemic is devastating communities — and driving health care professionals to examine and evaluate prescribing practices. The fifth Mayo Clinic National Health Checkup focuses on awareness and behaviors related to opioid use in pain management.

## Prescription Preferences

### FOR TREATMENT AFTER SURGERY

Almost all Americans would choose an alternative to opioid pain relievers — but many don't ask for one.

**94%**

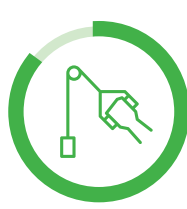
Would Choose an Alternative



**25%**

Spoke to a Doctor About Alternatives

### LEADING ALTERNATIVES



**80%**

Physical Therapy



**75%**

Over-the-Counter Pain Relievers



**53%**

Alternative Medicine (e.g. Acupuncture)



**49%**

Medical Marijuana

## Perceptions of Risk

"Opioid abuse is a significant issue in my community"

**BUT...**

"I would not become dependent on opioids if prescribed"

**49%**

**67%**



#1 Reason to Seek Alternative Treatment

**FEAR OF ADDICTION**

### OPEN TO DISCUSSING RISK



## Confusion and Misconceptions

### THE WHY

**Opioids are most effective for short-term pain, not chronic pain,** as patients can develop tolerance for them over time.

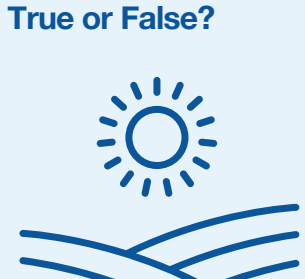


**79%**  
Believe chronic pain is a reason for opioid prescription

**31%**  
Have used opioids for chronic pain

### THE WHERE

#### True or False?



**Rural Areas**

Among the hardest hit by opioid addiction

**TRUE**



**Urban Communities**

More likely to be cited as being at risk for opioid addiction

**TRUE**

#### Did you know?

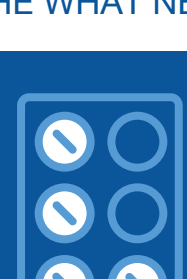
Opioid addiction affects communities of all sizes across the nation.

#### Increase in Death Rates (Between 1999-2015)

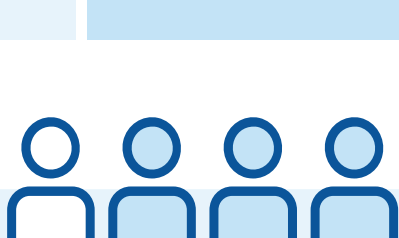
**4x**  
18 to 25-year-olds

**3x**  
Women

### THE WHAT NEXT



**Only 1 in 4**



– Said a pharmacist or doctor told them what to do with unused pills

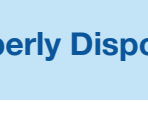
– Participated in drug disposal program

### Americans Are Not Properly Disposing of Unused Medication



**30%**

Keep in Medicine Cabinet



**17%**

Flush Down Toilet



**17%**

Throw in Garbage



**12%**

Use to Treat Other Pain

**Participating in a disposal program prevents medicine from getting in the wrong hands.**

