

# WARNING

## This Drug May Kill You Screening Guide

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### PREMIERES

May 1st at 10p/9c on HBO

Also available on HBO NOW | HBO GO | HBO ON-DEMAND

For more information, go to [HBO.com/Opioids](https://www.hbo.com/Opioids)

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Invite your friends, family and colleagues to watch the film together, and then have a post-screening discussion.

### WHAT'S THE FILM ABOUT?

Warning: This Drug May Kill You takes an unflinching look at the devastating effects of opioid addiction in the U.S., profiling four families whose lives have been decimated by addictions that all began with legitimate prescriptions to dangerous painkillers. Through the personal and emotional stories of people on the front lines of this epidemic, the film sheds light on the struggles of ordinary people who were prescribed highly addictive opioid pain medications, which are too often the gateway to a very similar opioid, heroin. Featuring home videos and photos that humanize this public health crisis, along with important statistics and information about opioid use and treatment, **Warning: This Drug May Kill You** is an eye-opening look at a terrifying epidemic that is devastating communities across this country, and the toll it has taken on its victims and their families.

### HOW DO YOU HOST A SCREENING?

Invite your group to a gathering spot - anywhere from your living room to a more formal space - to watch the film together. Before you watch, a note of caution: this film contains content and images that some - especially those struggling with an opioid use disorder - may find disturbing. Please be mindful of your audience.

Here are some tips for hosting a screening:

**1. Bring your group together.** Send out invitations and collect RSVPs. Here's a sample of what your invitation can say:

<HOST NAME> cordially invites you and a guest to a screening and discussion of

## **WARNING: This Drug May Kill You**

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<TIME> WELCOME

<TIME> SCREENING (length 60m)

Please RSVP to <EMAIL address> by <DATE>.

Create a Facebook event as well. Then, promote your screening to potential guests. Tag your tweets with [#ThisDrugMayKillYou](#) and [@HBODocs](#). Share the poster (see the end of the guide). Send the link to the trailer too, available at [www.hbo.com/opioids](http://www.hbo.com/opioids)

**2. Introduce the film.** Take a moment to provide a **warning** to your group: this film contains content and images that some - especially those struggling with an opioid use disorder - may find disturbing. It should not be viewed by children under the age of 14 without adult supervision. Ask your group, 'How do you think people become addicted to opioids?' Give everyone a chance to write or at least consider his/her responses before the film.

**3. Watch the film.** Extended interviews with the featured experts are available on [HBO.com/Opioids](http://HBO.com/Opioids).

**4. Talk about what you saw.** What have they learned? Have their perceptions changed? See below for more sample discussion questions.

**5. Think about what your group can do to learn about opioids and get help for anyone struggling with opioid misuse disorder.** Invite guests to go to review the resources below. Also, urge people to tell their personal networks about the film, and the issues it raises.

**6. Thank your guests.** Send a thank you email the next day, and include some follow up comments on the discussion. You can include links to some of the groups listed below.

## **How do I get the discussion going?**

After the credits end, turn up the lights and kick off the conversation. Below are some discussion prompts to start you off. A good place to start is by asking your guests if they were surprised by what they saw.

Addiction for everyone featured in the documentary began with a legitimate opioid prescription from a doctor. What types of opioids are prescribed in the film? Do you know which medications are opioids?

*In the film, Stephany had been prescribed Percocet, OxyContin and Norco. There are a number of other prescription opioids that are not mentioned in the film. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) created a list of [commonly prescribed opioid pain medications](#) that includes the generic and brand names of opioid medications.*

Have you ever been prescribed opioids? Did they help your pain? How many pills were you given? Was it hard to stop taking them?

*In 2016, the CDC created [opioid prescribing guidelines](#) for medical professionals. The guidelines recommend that opioid treatment for short-term pain last only three to seven days. A recent CDC study found that opioid dependency can develop within a few days of initial exposure.<sup>1</sup>*

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Do you have unused opioid pain medications in your medicine cabinet? Why could it be a problem to keep unused medications in your medicine cabinet? Do you know how to dispose of unused medications?

*Keeping unused opioid medications in your medicine cabinet can be dangerous because they could get in the wrong hands. The best way to get rid of unused opioid pain medications is to find a safe method of medication disposal. Opioids should not be flushed down the toilet as they can contaminate groundwater. [Dispose My Meds](#) is an organization that helps you find a medication disposal in your area. Additionally, the FDA has [tips for unused medication disposal](#).*

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80% of recent heroin users started with prescription opioids. Were you surprised to learn about the connection between the prescription opioids and heroin?

*Prescription opioids like oxycodone and hydrocodone are derived from opium and produce effects that are nearly identical to heroin. Many young adults struggling with opioid addiction switch from prescription opioids to heroin because it's cheaper to buy on the street.*

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In the film, we see Kathy teach her granddaughter Audrey how to use Naloxone (sold under the brand name Narcan) as a preventative measure in case Stephany overdoses. Would you know what to do if you saw someone overdose?

*See an overdose? Call 9-1-1 immediately. Your call may save a life. Many states have Good Samaritan laws which can offer limited immunity from arrest and prosecution for simple drug possession. Find out if you have a [Good Samaritan law in your state](#) and learn more about the scope of provisions.*

*The use of the overdose reversal drug Naloxone is considered an important step in saving the lives of people who are addicted to opioids, although its use is often not well understood. While it is not a treatment for addiction, it can bring a person back from a potentially deadly overdose, and provides an opportunity to introduce the patient to treatment options. More and more communities are encouraging first responders, emergency rooms and families to have it on hand for overdose emergencies. It is now available in some states at pharmacies without a prescription from your doctor. NIDA offers a fact sheet with information on how to use the various forms of [Naloxone \(Narcan and Evzio\)](#).*

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6610a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6610a1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6610a1.htm?s_cid=mm6610a1_w)

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A number of families in the film tell us in the film that their loved one was in and out of various residential rehab programs, but many ultimately lost their battle with opioid addiction. Do you know anyone who struggles with opioid addiction? What type of treatment worked best for them? What do you know about medication-assisted treatment programs?

*Addiction is a chronic and potentially deadly brain disease that often includes relapse. Studies have shown that medication-assisted treatment is more effective than abstinence based programs for opioid addiction. Long-term treatment that includes medications like buprenorphine (Suboxone), methadone and extended release naltrexone (Vivitrol) can reduce cravings and allow individuals to recover and function normally. NIDA created a fact sheet where you can learn more about [Medication-Assisted Treatment \(MAT\)](#).*

*The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) created a [Medication-Assisted Treatment locator](#) to help you learn more about MAT and find effective treatment in your area. SAMHSA also offers a free, confidential, 24/7 helpline [1-800-662-HELP \(4357\)](#).*

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The families featured in the film are white and live in suburban areas. Do you think this reflective of the epidemic overall?

*While addiction can affect anyone, there has been a particularly sharp rise in mortality rates of young white people due to drug overdoses from prescription painkillers and heroin. One recent study even found that 90% of new heroin users were white.<sup>2</sup> Increasingly, they are from middle-income and wealthy communities too. The reasons seem to vary. While many have pointed to the more than tripling of opioid prescriptions over the past twenty years as a key factor, others have highlighted how some health care have under-prescribed opioid painkillers to minority patients based on stereotypes, as well as the impact of the economic downturn in historically white areas of the country.*

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"I firmly believe that there are so many people that are being prescribed opioids without any direction or support that have no idea what they are getting into" says father and husband Britt Doyle in the film "and then once they can't get out of it, the shame and the inability to actually confront it and talk about it makes it worse because now all of a sudden they are an addict." What are the ways people can decrease the stigma that comes with addiction? Can you identify stigma within your own communities?

*Addiction is a chronic brain disease, not a moral failing. Stigma isolates those struggling with addiction and prevents them from seeking treatment. The national organization [Shatterproof](#) seeks to eliminate the shame and stigma associated with addiction. Additionally, Shatterproof invites families who have lost a loved one to the disease of addiction to share their story and create a virtual [memorial](#) to their loved one.*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/1874575>

## RESOURCES

### WHERE CAN I FIND HELP FOR FAMILIES?

Shatterproof

[www.shatterproof.org](http://www.shatterproof.org)

Live 4 Lali

[live4lali.org](http://live4lali.org)

GRASP

[grasphelp.org](http://grasphelp.org)

### WHERE CAN I FIND TREATMENT OPTIONS?

SAMHSA Treatment Navigator

[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids

[drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org)

### WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES FOR PRESCRIBING OPIOIDS?

CDC: Opioid Overdose: Guideline Resources

[www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/resources.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/resources.html)

PROP | Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing

[www.supportprop.org](http://www.supportprop.org)

Turn the Tide RX

[turnthetiderx.org](http://turnthetiderx.org)

### WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OPIOID ADDICTION EPIDEMIC?

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

CDC: Opioid Overdose

[www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html)

## Statistics from the Film

Opioid overdoses killed more than 33,000 people in 2015, more than any year on record. Nearly half of all opioid overdose deaths involve a prescription opioid. (CDC)

Deaths from prescription opioids have quadrupled since 1999. (CDC)

91 people die every day from an opioid overdose. (CDC)

80% of recent heroin users started with prescription opioids. (NIDA)

Over 2 million people in America have a prescription opioid use disorder, contributing to increased heroin use and the spread of HIV and hepatitis (CDC)

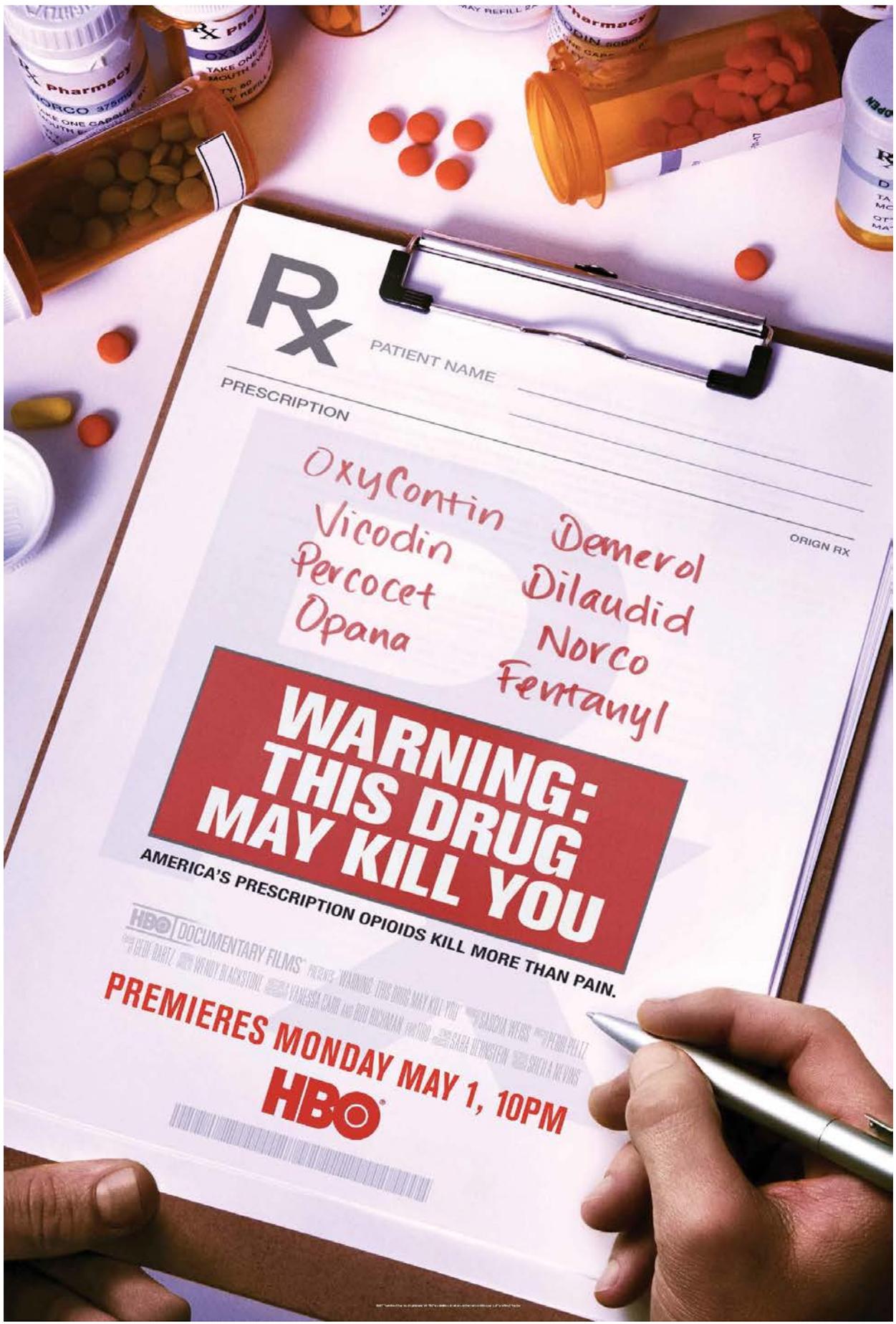
The US makes up less than 5% of the world's population, yet uses 81% of the opioid supply. (CDC)

There are 250 million prescriptions for opioids written each year – enough for every adult in America to have a bottle of pills. (Surgeon General)

Since 1999, the amount of prescription opioids sold in the U.S. nearly quadrupled, yet there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain that Americans report. (CDC)

The makers of opioid painkillers spent eight times more on lobbying and campaign contributions than the entire US gun lobby. (AP/Center for Public Integrity)

80% of people struggling with opioid addiction do not receive effective treatment. (Johns Hopkins Study in JAMA)



**Rx**

PATIENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PRESCRIPTION

OxyContin	Demerol
Vicodin	Dilaudid
Percocet	Norco
Opana	Fentanyl

ORIGIN RX

**WARNING:  
THIS DRUG  
MAY KILL YOU**

AMERICA'S PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS KILL MORE THAN PAIN.

HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS PRESENTS "WARNING: THIS DRUG MAY KILL YOU" PRODUCED BY VANESSA CAHO AND BOB HOLMANN EDITED BY SALVA ULINSTEIN WRITTEN BY STEVE A. NELSON  
 WITH GUESTS: DR. DANIEL J. CLAYTON, DR. WENDY D. ACKSTONE, DR. VANESSA CAHO AND BOB HOLMANN, EDITOR SALVA ULINSTEIN, WRITER STEVE A. NELSON

**PREMIERES MONDAY MAY 1, 10PM**  
**HBO**

