



# 3 in 10 Ohio adults were prescribed pain reliever; most felt amount correct

The **Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP)** is conducted every year to learn more about the health opinions, behaviors and status of Ohio adults. In 2018, OHIP asked Ohio adults several questions about their experiences receiving prescription pain relievers over the past five years.

## WHAT DID OHIP FIND?

OHIP asked, "During the past five years has a doctor, dentist or other medical professional prescribed a pain reliever for you that you could not purchase 'over the counter' such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet or codeine?"

## Adults in fair or poor health more likely to be prescribed pain reliever

About 3 in 10 Ohio adults (29%) have been prescribed a pain reliever in the past five years. Overall, Ohio adults who rate their health as fair/poor (43%) are more likely than those who rate their health as good or very good/excellent (25%) to be prescribed a pain reliever. There is no significant difference in whether a person received a pain reliever prescription based on their income.

## Percentage of Ohio adults who have been prescribed a pain reliever in the past five years

Ohio adults **29%**

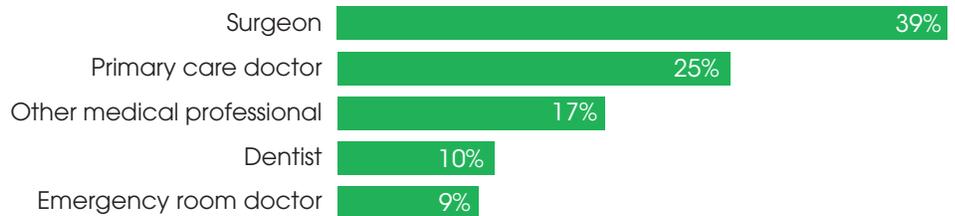
### By self-reported health status



SOURCE: 2018 Ohio Health Issues Poll (released October 2018)

INTERACT FOR HEALTH

## 'What type of medical professional prescribed the pain reliever for you?'



SOURCE: 2018 Ohio Health Issues Poll (released October 2018)

INTERACT FOR HEALTH

## 7 in 10 adults who were prescribed pain reliever felt they were given the right amount

OHIP then asked the 3 in 10 Ohio adults who said they had been prescribed a pain reliever in the past five years, "Thinking about the most recent time a doctor, dentist or other medical professional prescribed a pain

reliever for you, did you feel they prescribed more pills than you needed to control your pain, less pills than you needed to control your pain or the right amount of pills you needed to control your pain?"

About 7 in 10 Ohio adults (69%) who reported being prescribed a pain reliever felt they had been

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prescribed the right amount of pills. About 1 in 10 (12%) felt a medical professional prescribed **more** pills than needed to control their pain. Two in 10 (18%) felt they had been prescribed **fewer** pills than needed to control their pain.

## Ohio adults most often prescribed pain reliever by a surgeon

OHIP also asked the 29% of Ohio adults who reported being prescribed a pain reliever in the past five years, "What type of medical professional prescribed the pain reliever for you?" Ohio adults who were prescribed a pain reliever most frequently reported receiving it from a surgeon (39%), followed by a primary care doctor (25%), some other medical professional (17%), a dentist (10%) and a doctor in an emergency

room (9%). (See graph on first page.) This reflects trends seen in data collected by the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System.

## WHY DO WE ASK THESE QUESTIONS?

We know that some people who are addicted to opioids began their use with a valid prescription. We also know that some people receive more medication than they need to manage their pain, either because of a larger dosage or a prescription for more days than needed. Research shows that even relatively low doses of opioids carry risk of overdose, and that the risk increases as the amount of medication increases.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Aug. 27, 2017). CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain. Retrieved Oct. 15, 2018, from [https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/calculating\\_total\\_daily\\_dose-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/calculating_total_daily_dose-a.pdf).

Congress and state legislatures have made many changes recently to reduce the use of opioids. These include changing prescribing practices to limit the number of pills given in each prescription and to create extra safeguards for patients. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also issued prescribing guidelines to encourage reducing pain reliever prescriptions. Most of this work has focused on medical prescribers. According to state tracking, the number of opioid prescriptions dispensed since 2012 in Ohio has dropped annually.<sup>2</sup> The questions asked by OHIP allow us to hear experiences with prescribed pain prescriptions from a consumer perspective.

<sup>2</sup> Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System. (2018). State Statistics. Retrieved Oct. 11, 2018, from <https://www.ohiopmp.gov/State.aspx>.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

In May 2018, Gov. Kasich announced new rules for physicians who work to improve care for chronic pain patients. These rules establish extra steps to ensure that people under their care who are prescribed pain relievers are closely managed in order to prevent opioid misuse. According Gov. Kasich's office, "establishing safety checkpoints on prescription opioids for long-term pain will help ensure that treatment is improving patients' quality of life without increasing the risk of opioid misuse and addiction." For more information visit <https://mha.ohio.gov/Portals/0/assets/GCOAT/ChronicRulesFactSheet.pdf>.