

# Rx painkiller deaths on the rise

From 1999 to 2010, deaths from prescription pain relief drugs increased more than 400 percent in women and 265 percent in men. These facts are from a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“Prescription painkiller deaths have skyrocketed in women (6,600 in 2010), four times as many as died from cocaine and heroin combined,” said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. “Stopping this epidemic in women – and men – is everyone’s business. Doctors need to be cautious about prescribing and patients about using these drugs.”

## Use Rx pain relief medicines wisely

- Let your doctor know about all prescribed and OTC medicines you take. This includes ones that treat depression, anxiety, or sleep problems. It includes vitamins and herbal products, too.
- Ask your doctor the risk of addiction when he or she prescribes sleeping pills, strong painkillers, etc. Find out how long you should take the medicines. Ask if there are ways to help treat your problem without them.
- Find out how much alcohol, if any, can be taken with your prescribed medicines.
- Follow the guidelines that your doctor and pharmacist provide with every prescription.
- Do not take another person’s prescribed medicines.
- Do not share your medicines with others.

