

# Opioid-Induced Hyperalgesia

Sometimes, the very medicine meant to reduce pain can actually make it worse. This is called **opioid-induced hyperalgesia (OIH)**.

## What It Means

- Opioids (like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, fentanyl) can sometimes make your nervous system more sensitive to pain.
- Instead of lowering pain, long-term use may increase how strongly you feel pain signals.
- This is different from tolerance (needing more medicine for the same effect). OIH means the pain itself feels worse.

## Signs to Watch For

- Your pain feels more widespread or different than before.
- Pain increases even when your opioid dose stays the same.
- Higher doses don't bring better relief.
- You feel more sensitive to things that didn't used to hurt (like touch or temperature).

## Why This Matters

- OIH can trap people in a cycle of more pain and higher medication doses.
- Recognizing it helps your physician adjust treatment to reduce pain in safer ways.

## What Can Help

- Working with your doctor to carefully lower or change opioid use.
- Using non-opioid pain treatments (nerve blocks, physical therapy, other medications, exercise, mindfulness).
- Supporting your body with sleep, nutrition, and stress management.

## Goal

Understanding OIH helps you and your doctor make the best choices for managing pain safely and effectively.