







# Keep Yourself and Other Veterans Safe from Overdose

Veterans face unique risks when it comes to substance use and overdose. We need your leadership to help reduce the impact of substance use and decrease the risks of overdose for those you served alongside. When you talk to others about the risks and support them in recovery, it helps keep everyone healthy and safe.

## Where to Find Help






Contact these sources right now if you or another veteran needs help for substance use or mental health concerns.

-  **Veterans Crisis Line**  
(800) 273-8255, then press 1
-  **2-1-1** (health and social services)  
Dial 2-1-1
-  **Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services** - (800) 563-4086
-  **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
(800) 273-TALK (8255)
-  **National Alliance on Mental Illness HelpLine**  
(800)-950-NAMI (6264)
-  **SAMHSA's National Helpline**  
1-800-662-HELP (4357)







[drugfreet.org/safe](https://drugfreet.org/safe)

## ⓘ RISKS

-  **Mental Health/Stress**
  - › Trauma sustained during active duty service can lead to PTSD and other mental health conditions that increase the risk for substance misuse.
-  **Chronic Pain**
  - › Veterans are more likely to deal with chronic pain than non-veterans.
  - › Opioids are commonly prescribed to treat pain from injuries sustained in the line of duty.
-  **Polysubstance or Mixing Substances**
  - › Alcohol, counterfeit pills, and illegal drugs can be dangerous on their own and cause deadly interactions when taken with prescription medications.
-  **Misuse**
  - › It's dangerous to take medications that aren't prescribed for you.
  - › Taking prescriptions in greater amounts and/or more frequently than prescribed is misuse, even if it's your prescription.
  - › Misuse increases the likelihood for dependence and addiction.
-  **Counterfeit Pills**
  - › It can be difficult to tell the difference between counterfeit pills and real medications.
  - › Counterfeit pills are not regulated and can contain fentanyl, which is 100x more potent than heroin.
  - › In 2021, fentanyl was responsible for 175 deaths per day in the U.S.

## ✔ ACTION STEPS

-  **Communication**
  - › Support from others, especially other veterans, is crucial when seeking help during tough times.
  - › Speak with a doctor about your medications and how they might interact with each other and other substances, like alcohol.
  - › Contact the VA, or use one of the many online or in-person support groups to connect with others.
-  **Safe Use**
  - › Only take medication that is prescribed for you and take it exactly as directed.
-  **Safe Storage & Disposal**
  - › Do not share prescription medications with anyone.
  - › Order a free medication lockbox from [drugfreet.org](https://drugfreet.org) to securely store your medications.
  - › Locate a medication drop box near you or order free medication disposal pouches from [drugfreet.org](https://drugfreet.org) to dispose of unused or expired medications safely.
-  **Overdose Prevention**
  - › Learn how to recognize the signs of an overdose.
  - › In the event of an overdose, call 911 immediately and administer naloxone, if possible.
  - › Do not delay seeking help if you have concerns about substance use or any health conditions.

See Available Resources  
on Other Side

