

**EVERYONE** is entitled to take care of themselves, whether they use drugs or not.

Learning to take care of yourself takes time and thought.

Talk to your friends, find out what they know.

Learn more about self-care here:

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

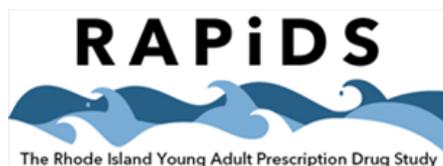
[harmreduction.org](http://harmreduction.org)

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

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

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

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## #4: Self Care



**SLEEP.** Get into a mini routine if you can, even if you don't sleep in the same place every night. Stretch at night before bed. Take a walk outside or exercise during the day. Melatonin supplements are cheap and help you sleep, take only 3mg for maximum effect—any more per day and it might actually keep you awake.



**BREATHE.** Breathing is a great way to cope with stress! Try this: Breathe in while you slowly count to 4, hold your breath while you count to 4, then breathe out slowly to the count of 4. Now do that a few more times. For more tips go to [mindful.org](http://mindful.org).



**DRINK WATER, CHEW GUM and/or BRUSH YOUR TEETH** to avoid dry mouth. A dry mouth and grinding can really hurt your teeth. Drinking water, chewing gum, & brushing your teeth all help with dry mouth. The saliva protects your teeth from getting cavities or other damage. 8 glasses of 8oz of water each day is the ideal amount.



**Increase your FIBER.** If you are taking prescription opioids, you may get constipated. Drinking water and eating high fiber foods can relieve constipation (like popcorn & leafy green vegetables). Generic fiber supplements help too—try Metamucil or the store brand version of it.



**Stomach Problems?** For controlling diarrhea, over-the-counter medicines, such as Kaopectate, Pepto-Bismol (bismuth) or Imodium (loperamide) can help. Sucking on ginger, sipping ginger ale, seltzer water, peppermint or chamomile tea are all helpful for nausea.

## SAFER RX



Use these TIPS & TOOLS to take care of yourself when taking prescription drugs--even if you get them from your doctor with a prescription

# #1: Know your pills

1. What **COLOR** is it?



2. What **LETTERS, NUMBERS, or LOGOS** are on it?



3. What is the **SHAPE**? Round, oblong, capsule, etc.



4. How **BIG** is it?

Compare sizes with a thumbnail or something easy to remember.



5. Is there any **"SCORING"** on the pill? A line down the middle, or a seam where colors come together.

There can be LOTS of generics of the very same drug, and they all can look different. Take a picture or send yourself a text to remember what pills you use.

# #2: Know your tolerance

**KNOW HOW MUCH drug or "active ingredient" is in a pill.** Some pills have a low dose, some pills have a high dose of opioids.

**KNOW THE DIFFERENCE between "immediate-release" and "extended-release" formulations.** Extended-release pills contain much more drug than immediate-release pills.



**Oxymorphone (Opana) is twice as potent as many other opioids,** such as oxycodone and methadone. So, if you're used to 20 mg of oxycodone and you take oxymorphone, you should take half as much oxymorphone (10 mg) to avoid an overdose.

**FENTANYL is very strong and your risk for OVERDOSE is HIGH. Be extra careful with fentanyl.**

**WATCH THE TYLENOL!** Tylenol is tough on your liver! The bigger the pill, the more Tylenol you're getting, this includes Percocet and Vicodin. Smaller pills don't include Tylenol. **This is extra important** if you are drinking alcohol, have liver problems, or have hepatitis C.



# #3: No OverDose

1. **Use around OTHER PEOPLE.** If you overdose, you can't tell someone what's happening. **Make a plan** with them about what to do if you overdose. **RI has laws to protect you & your friends, so CALL 911 during an overdose.**

2. **CUT BACK** if you have a bad cold, asthma or if you snore a lot. **Unusual snoring after taking painkillers can be a sign of an overdose.**

3. **Take LESS** if you haven't used in some time, for ANY reason. Your tolerance will go down fast.



4. **Drink with CAUTION.**

**PACE YOURSELF & drink with friends.** Drink water between alcoholic drinks and space it out from when you take pills. **Warning: Mixing alcohol with pills increases the risk of overdose, especially if taken at the same time.**

5. **Get NALOXONE to reverse an accidental overdose!** Visit ANY Walgreen's or CVS pharmacy counter to get yours, insurance will cover it or you can self-pay. No prescription required. [www.nopeRI.org](http://www.nopeRI.org)