Tolerance, Physical Dependence, and Addiction: What's the difference?

Developing a tolerance and physical dependence is a normal, expected result of taking opiates on a regular basis for a long period of time. Dependence on opiates can occur in as little as a few weeks. Physical dependence to your medications is not the same as addiction, although there is a risk of becoming addicted to prescription opiates, even if you take them as prescribed. The development of addiction to your prescriptions is well documented and a significant risk for long term opiate use.

FACTS Tolerance, Dependence, and Addiction are not the same thing

For more information or to schedule an appointment with a physician, please call Plumas District Hospital at:

(530) 283-2121
or
(530) 283-0650
or
(530) 283-5640
not managing to cut down or stop using opiates but wanting to (tolerate) need more of the opiates to get the effect than you’re used to. There is no tolerance to these substances. Problems in relationships may arise. Continuing to use opiates even when it causes worse body effects. Physical or psychological problems that could have been caused by or made worse by the use of opiates. Ruminating on your primary focus to be on opiates’ drug use.

Continuing to use even when it’s not in your best interest to keep using. Taking and abusing them. Spending a lot of time thinking about getting substances. Allowing your primary focus to be on drugs and drug use. Experiencing any of the following: Lethargic, dormitory, or delirious.

You may experience symptoms of withdrawal when you reduce medication use or exposure by too much, or it is stopped or tapered abruptly. Physical dependence means that if you decrease your medication use or exposure by too much, or it is stopped or tapered abruptly, you may experience symptoms of withdrawal. Physical dependence to your medication is a risk of drug addiction. Many people who have a previous and family history of addiction are more common in this risk of becoming addicted.

### Physical Dependence

- **Options:**
  - Experiencing signs of tolerance to your treatment. Tell your provider if you are experiencing signs of tolerance to your treatment.
  - **Tolerance:** Your body may develop an increased sensitivity to the opiate of a treatment, but the amount of the opiate from your body is not increased. The amount of drug needed to achieve the same effect may increase. However, some amount of pain relief. Tolerance to medication means that you may need more medication over time to get the same amount of pain relief. However, it's important to consult with your provider before you increase your use of your medication. They can help you to taper off the dose safely and gradually decrease your dose of your medication. They can also help you to taper off the dose safely and gradually decrease your dose of your medication. They can also help you to taper off the dose safely and gradually decrease your dose of your medication. They can also help you to taper off the dose safely and gradually decrease your dose of your medication.