

River Cities Interventional Pain Specialists

Since 2004 Dr. Randall P. Brewer has been in clinical private practice in Shreveport, Louisiana and maintains academic appointments at Duke University and Louisiana State University, where he routinely lectures in the areas of Pain Medicine and clinical Neuroscience in the Department of Neurology and the Medical school. He is board certified by the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the American Board of Pain Medicine, and the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Dr. Brewer and his multi-disciplinary team of highly skilled nurses and physician extenders provide comprehensive pain management treatment solutions to treat chronic pain disorders. The team works collaboratively with patients and area providers to develop individualized treatment plans and attainable goals. . These strategies help patients to effectively address a wide range of chronic pain disorders.

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TOP TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT...



ADDICTION TO PAIN MEDICATIONS

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1. What is addiction?

Addiction is a brain disorder. Individuals with chemical addiction need a

substance to feel good or even normal. The exact cause of addiction is not known. Certain individuals may be predisposed to addictions because of stress in early life, or because of an inherited condition.

2. Will I become addicted if I take pain medications?

Individuals who have serious pain problems generally do not become addicted to pain medications. If you find that you crave your pain medications or if you have had problems with pain medications or other addictions (alcohol, smoking), then you may be at a greater risk for addiction.

3. How do I know if I am addicted to my pain medication?

If you have intense cravings for your medication, or if you feel you need to take the medications to feel good or normal then you may be headed towards addiction. Especially, if you want to take your medications when you are not in pain, or when you are stressed, you may have a problem with addiction.

4. What happens if I become addicted to my pain medications?

Addiction to pain medications is a life-threatening problem. Like other brain disorders, addiction can be treated, but it requires a dedicated effort on the part of the patient and the provider. Serious consequences from addiction occur frequently. Common consequences are arrests, loss of jobs, and loss of family. People with addiction are a danger to themselves and others. Overdose can be life threatening or even fatal.

5. Should I not take my pain medications if I am afraid I will become addicted?

Most people who are afraid of pain medications do not become addicted. Fear about pain medication is understandable if you have known persons with an addiction problem. You should discuss your concerns with your doctor if you are thinking about not taking your pain medications.

6. Which pain medications are the most addictive?

A person can be addicted to just about any pain medication. The most common medications associated with addiction are medications that work really fast. These are called “short acting.” Examples include oxycodone (Percocet), hydrocodone (Lortab, Vicodin), and hydrodione (Dilaudid).

7. What are narcotics? Are they addictive?

The technical term “narcotic” describes a number of different medications. In common usage, the term “narcotic” refers to the class of pain medications called “opioids.” Opioid addiction is one of the most common types of addictions, Opioids are not “addictive” by themselves. That means that opioids do not cause the addiction.

8. Why are they used to treat pain problems?

Opioids are very effective pain medications and can be used to treat a variety of pain problems. These medications are related to substances produced by the brain called “endogenous opioids.” These hormones allow us to control pain and may have a role in our sense of well-being. When we use opioids for pain control, we are taking advantage of our body’s own pain control system.

9. Can I become addicted to other medications?

Yes, opioids or “narcotics” are not the only medications that can support an addiction. Many other medications can make a person feel good or “high.” Usually these medications are used in combination with an opioid, such as Lortab, or together. Some of the most common medications in this category are the muscle relaxants (such as Soma) and the tranquilizers (such as Xanax).

10. What do I do if I think that I have become addicted to my pain medication?

Common signs of addiction include taking your medication to feel good, relieve stress, or “get high.” If you have taken a lot of extra medication, gotten medications from another physician, or from another person, you should undergo an evaluation for addiction. Remember, addiction is a brain disorder than can be treated. If you think that you may have some of these signs or symptoms, call your doctor immediately. Rehabilitation for drug addiction is the best way to begin treatment.