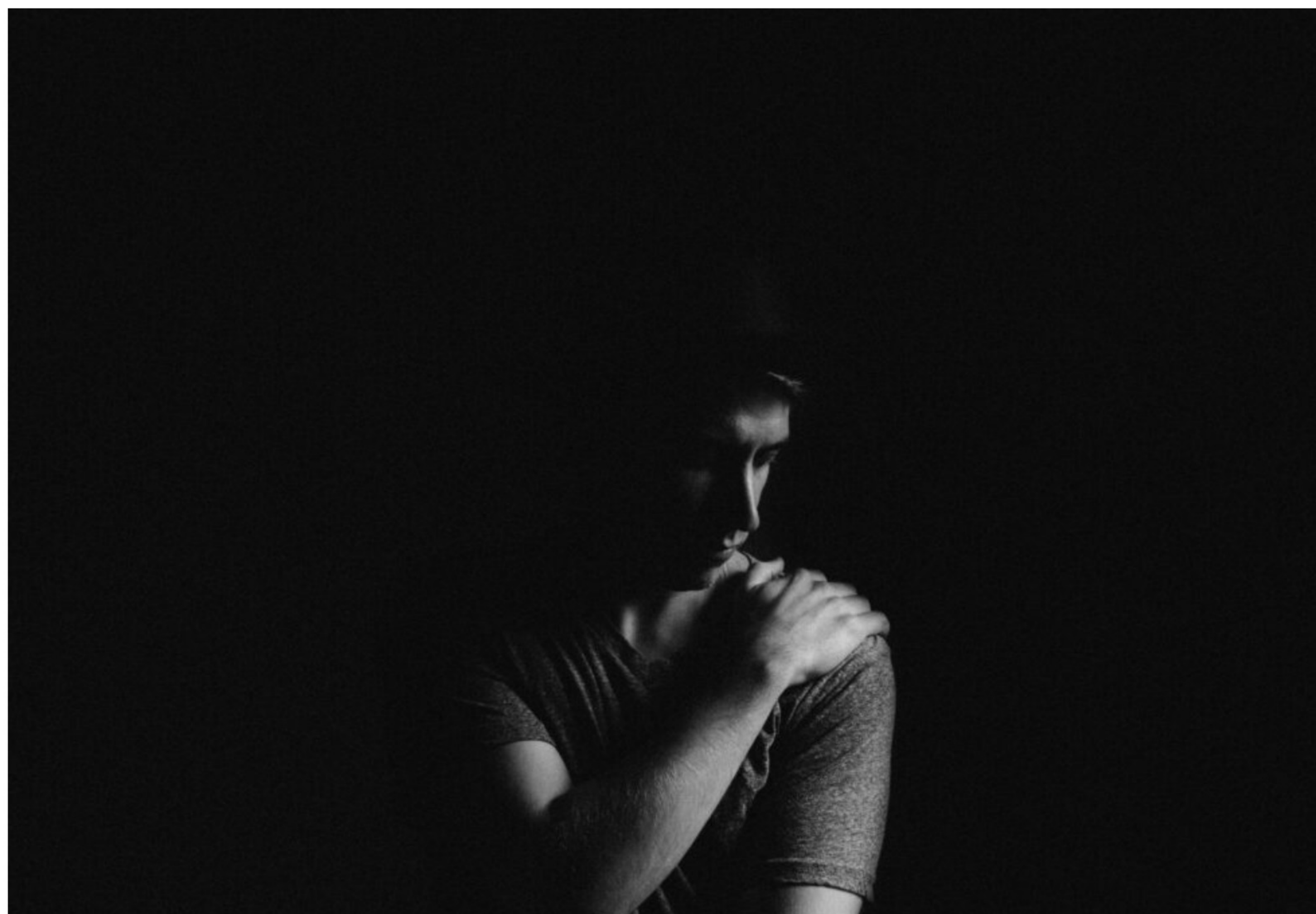


What Drugs Are Classified As Opioids And How Addictive Are They?

by Grand Falls Recovery Center | Nov 23, 2023 | Addiction



Opioids have been at the forefront of public health concerns for many years, with addiction and overdose rates reaching alarming levels. To address this crisis effectively, it's crucial to understand what drugs fall under the category of opioids and to comprehend the factors that contribute to their addictive nature. We will explore the various drugs classified as opioids and delve into their addictive properties, shedding light on the complexity of opioid addiction.

Understanding Opioids

Opioids are a class of drugs that originate from the opium poppy plant, *Papaver somniferum*, or are synthesized in laboratories to mimic the effects of natural opiates. Opioids act on the body's opioid receptors, primarily in the brain and spinal cord, to relieve pain and induce a sense of euphoria. While these drugs can be medically useful for pain management, they also possess a high potential for misuse and addiction.

Common Opioids

Natural Opiates:

- **Morphine:** Morphine is a potent natural opioid commonly used in medical settings to manage severe pain, such as that following surgery or injury.
- **Codeine:** Codeine is a milder natural opioid often found in combination with other medications to alleviate pain and coughing.

Semi-Synthetic Opioids:

- **Oxycodone:** Oxycodone is a semi-synthetic opioid frequently prescribed to manage moderate to severe pain, known by brand names like OxyContin.
- **Hydrocodone:** Hydrocodone is another semi-synthetic opioid used to treat pain, often in combination with acetaminophen or ibuprofen, as in Vicodin.

Synthetic Opioids:

- **Fentanyl:** Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is incredibly potent, and often used in medical settings for severe pain management. However, illicitly manufactured fentanyl is a major contributor to overdose deaths.
- **Tramadol:** Tramadol is a synthetic opioid used to manage moderate to moderately severe pain, and it has a lower risk of addiction compared to stronger opioids.

Illicit Opioids:

- **Heroin:** Heroin is an illegal opioid derived from morphine. It is commonly injected, smoked, or snorted and is highly addictive.
- **Illicit Fentanyl:** Illicitly manufactured fentanyl is a major concern in the opioid epidemic. It is often mixed with other drugs and is associated with a significant number of overdose deaths.

How Addictive Are Opioids?

Opioids are known for their high addictive potential due to the way they affect the brain's reward and pleasure centers. Here are key factors contributing to the addictive nature of opioids:

Rapid Onset of Action

Opioids deliver a rapid and intense sense of euphoria, which makes them highly reinforcing. Users experience relief from pain and a powerful "high" shortly after taking the drug, reinforcing the desire to use it again.

Physical Dependence

Regular use of opioids can lead to physical dependence, where the body becomes accustomed to the presence of the drug. This results in withdrawal symptoms when the drug is not used, further motivating continued use.

Tolerance

Over time, the body develops tolerance to the effects of opioids, meaning that higher doses are required to achieve the same level of pain relief or euphoria. Tolerance drives individuals to increase their opioid consumption, putting them at greater risk of addiction.

Psychological Dependence

Beyond physical dependence, opioids can also lead to psychological dependence, as users come to rely on the drug to cope with emotional or psychological distress. This mental reliance can be as powerful as the physical need for the drug.

Cravings and Compulsion

The intense cravings for opioids, coupled with the compulsion to use them, can make quitting extremely challenging. Users may feel driven to use the drug to relieve discomfort or distress.

Withdrawal Symptoms

When opioid use is discontinued, withdrawal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, muscle aches, anxiety, and insomnia can be highly uncomfortable. The fear of withdrawal can be a powerful motivator for continued drug use.

Social and Environmental Factors

Social and environmental factors, such as easy access to opioids, peer pressure, and a culture of drug use, can further contribute to addiction. These factors can make it difficult for individuals to break free from the cycle of use.

Contact Grand Falls Center for Recovery Today

Understanding the classification and addictive nature of opioids is the first step in addressing this issue. If you or someone you know is struggling with opioid addiction, don't wait to seek help. Reach out to professionals who specialize in addiction treatment and recovery.

Grand Falls Center for Recovery stands as a beacon of hope and support, offering resources and guidance to individuals seeking to break free from the cycle of opioid addiction. Today is the day to take that crucial step towards recovery and a healthier, addiction-free life. [Contact Grand Falls Center for Recovery](#) and start your journey to healing and sobriety.

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