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I Think My Spouse May Be Addicted To His Pain Medication

By [Joe Herzanek](#)

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As a drug counselor, I receive many questions. This next one is typical:

Q: I think my spouse may be addicted to his pain medication. He had knee replacement surgery several months ago and has gone back to work, but says he still needs to take pain pills. I think he is actually taking more now than he did right after the surgery. I'm not sure about all of this, and I don't know what or how to say something. His dad is a recovering alcoholic. I'm worried.

A: This is a tough question. The fact that you're concerned and also the mention of his Dad being in recovery does look like a red flag. Pain medications that are prescribed today are often strong narcotics. These drugs are real life-savers in many cases (when used for short periods of time). At the same time, they do have the potential for abuse. In fact, prescription pain-killers like Vicodin and Oxyconton have become the most abused of all prescription medications.

These drugs do two things: they relieve pain AND create a euphoric high, of sorts. Some people find they like the way the medication makes them "feel" and that is why these drugs have such a high potential for abuse. At some point the body will begin to develop a tolerance--and more of the medication will be needed to get the same effect. At this point it can become difficult to tell if the person is in genuine pain or just the pain of withdrawal. All they may know is, if I take some more pills I feel better. This is not a good thing.

I would talk to your husband about your concerns. If the situation persists seek some professional advice--sooner rather than later.

Joe Herzanek, a man who battled his own demons of addiction over twenty-five years ago, says, "I know people can change. If I can do it, anyone can!"

A recovering person himself, Joe is the president and founder of Changing Lives Foundation and author of the new book "Why Don't They Just Quit?" As an addiction counselor in Colorado he has spent thirteen years working in the criminal justice system.



His passion for helping men and women struggling with addiction, as well as

their family members and friends, inspire him to offer hope and solutions.

Joe offers words of encouragement: "Addiction is not a hopeless situation," he writes. "Addicts and alcoholics aren't crazy, and they can quit."

Joe and his wife Judy have three children, Jami, Jake, and Jessica, and enjoy the beautiful Colorado outdoors with their two Cairn Terriers, Lewis and Clark.

<http://www.whydonttheyjustquit.com>

<http://www.changinglivesfoundation.org>

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