

New Painkiller That Combines Oxycodone and Naloxone Approved by FDA

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A new painkiller that combines oxycodone and naloxone was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Naloxone was included in the drug to block the euphoric effects of oxycodone, making it less appealing to abuse.

The drug, Targiniq ER, is made by Purdue Pharma, which also makes OxyContin, the *Los Angeles Times* reports. Targiniq ER can be crushed and then snorted or injected. If the pills are crushed, the naloxone becomes active.

"Targiniq ER can still be abused, including when taken orally (by mouth), which is currently the most common way oxycodone is abused," according to a statement by the FDA. Targiniq is expected to "deter, but not totally prevent" abuse, the FDA said.

"The FDA is committed to combating the misuse and abuse of all opioids," Sharon Hertz, Deputy Director of the FDA's Division of Anesthesia, Analgesia and Addiction Products, said in the statement. "The development of opioids that are harder to abuse is needed in order to help address the public health crisis of prescription drug abuse in the U.S."

Dr. Andrew Kolodny, President of Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing, told the newspaper he is concerned that doctors who believe Targiniq is safe may be more likely to prescribe it than to look for alternatives. "If we really want to turn this epidemic around, the most important thing is to stop creating new cases of addiction," he said. "Coming up with new gimmicks isn't going to help."

Lynn Webster, a pain and addiction specialist and former president of the American Academy of Pain Medicine, said that while abuse-deterrent drugs such as Targiniq are not a good substitute for judicious prescribing, "the obvious alternative is not to have abuse-deterrent formulations, and I don't know anyone who would find that preferable."

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