

# OxyContin has changed

**Do you know someone who injects OxyContin?** If so, they need to be aware that the pills are changing. From the start of April, they are being replaced with a new version, which is **designed to prevent injecting** use.

The old 'oxy's have 'OC' on one side, and the strength of the pill in mg on the other;



The new formulation has the strength on one side, and "OP" written on the other side;



The new form of OxyContin is **MUCH harder to crush**, and **will not dissolve** in water, but turn into a thick gel (see below).



*After multiple strikes with a hammer*



*After more than 20 hammer strikes and pulling apart with fingers*



*After adding 2ml of water to 'crushed' pill*

This new formulation has been deliberately designed to prevent injecting. The gel is very difficult to 'draw up' and only a small amount will end up inside your syringe. Any portion of the pill that is injected has a high risk of causing significant vein or lung damage.

## How can I reduce the harm?

It is **STRONGLY** recommended that you do not inject these pills.

If your pill says "OP" on the side, the safest bet is to swallow it.

If you (or anyone you know) are determined to inject them, the following strategies may help reduce the possible harms:

- Use plenty of water (dilute it as much as is practical)
- Filter well and use a wheel filter (if available)
- Stop injecting if you experience pain at the injection site
- Stop injecting if you experience chest pain/breathlessness/visual problems (and seek immediate medical assistance)
- Reconsider getting another OP next time – Remember, **there is NO safe way of doing this.**

## Overdose risk

While the new formulation does not appear to carry increased risk of overdose, people switching from OxyContin to other opioids may have increased risk in the short term, until they become familiar with their strength and effects.

## How can I identify the reformulated tablets?

There are **two key indicators** to look for:

1. The box has been labelled with '**Reformulation**'.



2. The reformulated OxyContin tablets remain the **same colour**. However, they have **changed in size** (now slightly larger) and are **marked with 'OP' rather than 'OC'**.

Strength	10 mg	15 mg	20 mg	30 mg	40 mg	80 mg
Comparison of original (first) versus reformulated OxyContin® tablets (second).						
						

## Acknowledgements

Thanks for providing this information so quickly to our colleagues at:

- Sydney's Medically Supervised Injecting Centre;
- the Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL); &
- the Western Australian Substance Users' Association (WASUA).

A more comprehensive harm reduction resource will be available soon.