

FDA panel wants limits on hydrocodone painkillers

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Federal health advisors want new restrictions on hydrocodone, the highly addictive ingredient found in Vicodin and other widely abused prescription painkillers.

The [Food and Drug Administration](#)'s panel of [drug safety](#) specialists voted to subject hydrocodone drugs to the same restrictions as narcotics like oxycodone and morphine.

Hydrocodone is sold in combination pills like Vicodin, which mixes the drug with non-addictive painkillers like acetaminophen. Doctors prescribe the medicines to treat pain from injuries, surgery, arthritis and other ailments.

Hydrocodone consistently ranks as the first or second most-abused medicine in the U.S. each year, according to the Drug Enforcement Agency.

The DEA has asked the FDA to reclassify hydrocodone as a schedule III drug, limiting which kinds of medical professionals can write a prescription and how many times it can be refilled.

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