



## Opioid Medications for Pain Relief

### Introduction

This document contains important information about the medication your physician has prescribed to control your pain. We are providing this information to help you understand the pain relief and functional goals that your physician wants to achieve with your treatment plan.

Opioid medications are commonly used to treat pain. Opioids do not work for everyone and have serious risks and possible side effects. Opioids may provide pain relief but are unlikely to take the pain away completely. Your physician and you will determine if the benefits of pain medication outweighs the risks and possible harm.

Our providers do not provide long-term pain control for chronic conditions. Your prescription for pain is for short-term post-operative or post-trauma pain control. Patients needing long-term chronic pain control may be referred to their primary care provider or a physician specializing in pain management.

It is very important that you read this information carefully. If you do not understand or have questions, be sure to ask your physician, our nurses, or your pharmacist prior to taking the medication.

### Alternatives to Opioids to Help Reduce Pain

Opioids are one part of a pain management plan, that when used together, can help control your pain. These options can work in place of, or in combination with your opioid medication to help control your pain and improve your function.

Heat and Cold Therapy	Stretching
Exercise	Weight Loss
Massage	Acupuncture
Chiropractic Treatment	Nerve stimulation
Relaxation or Meditation Therapy	Physical Therapy
Occupational Therapy	Mental Health Therapy
Non-opioid Pain Medications	Injections
Spiritual or Social Activities	

## Risks & Side Effects

In addition to the serious risks of addiction, abuse, and fatal overdose, the use of opioid pain relievers can have a number of side effects, even when taken as directed:

- Tolerance — meaning you might need to take more of the medication for the same pain relief.
- Physical dependence — meaning you have symptoms of withdrawal when the medication is stopped.
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting and dry mouth
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression
- Itching and sweating
- Low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy, and strength

## Your Responsibilities When Taking Opioids

- Take your prescription as directed.
  - Do not take other people's prescriptions or allow others to use your prescription. This is dangerous, illegal and can lead to criminal charges.
  - Do not delay taking as directed or take more than is prescribed, early refills will not be allowed.
- Be cautious about driving or operating machinery.
  - You may feel sleepy or confused after taking these medications.
  - Do not drink alcohol or take "street drugs"  
Alcohol or "street drugs" combined with your medication can cause severe harm or death.
- Keep your medication in a safe and secure place out of reach of children, visitors, and pets.
  - We will not replace lost or stolen medication.
  - It is illegal to sell or give your opioid medication to another person.
  - Always store your prescription in the original labeled container.
- Inform all of your treating physicians that you are prescribed an opioid.
  - Do not obtain opioids from more than one physician or pharmacy at a time.
  - Be sure that you have informed us of all other medications or drugs (illegal or legal) that you are taking.
- Opioid prescriptions will **NOT** be electronically ordered or called into a pharmacy.
  - You must pick up a printed prescription from our office. An identification will be required.
  - Designating another person to pick up your prescription is discouraged. If that is necessary, it must be approved in advance by your physician and identification will be required.
  - Allow 2 business days to obtain a prescription refill. Opioids will not be refilled after hours, weekends or holidays. Plan ahead for refills.