PAIN & PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

If you’ve had an injury, surgery, or major dental work, you are likely to have pain. Pain is a normal part of life and healing. Talk with your doctor about how you can get the most safe and effective pain relief.

NON-OPIOID PAIN TREATMENTS HAVE FEWER RISKS
For pain that will likely be gone in a week or two, it is always best to start with non-opioid pain treatments. Opioids may help control pain at first, but they are usually not necessary.

Consider other options that may work just as well or better, but have far fewer risks.
- Over-the-counter pain relievers
- Physical therapy
- Exercise
- Professional help coping with the emotional effects of pain

OPIOIDS ARE STRONG PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS
Opioids can be the right choice for treating severe pain, such as from cancer or immediately after major surgery. However, medications such as these are very powerful and can be deadly. Even if you take them as directed, ALL opioids have serious side effects such as addiction and overdose.

OPIOIDS ARE CHEMICAL COUSINS OF HEROIN AND ARE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE
You can build up a tolerance to opioids over time, so you need to take more and more to get the same relief. The higher the dose, the more dangerous opioids are. You can even become addicted after a short time.

RISKS ARE GREATER WITH
- Pregnancy
- Older age (65 years or older)
- Sleep apnea
- Mental health conditions (such as depression or anxiety)
- History of drug misuse, substance use disorder, or overdose

Commonly prescribed opioids:

- Codeine
- Fentanyl (Duragesic Patch)
- Hydrocodone (Lortab, Norco, Vicodin)
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid, Exalgo)
- Meperidine (Demerol)
- Methadone (Methadose)
- Morphine (MS Contin, Kadian)
- Oxymorphone (Opana)
- Oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet)
- Tramadol (Ultram)

Avoid alcohol while taking prescription opioids.

Unless specifically advised by your health care provider, medications to avoid while taking opioids include:
- Benzodiazepines (such as Xanax or Valium)
- Muscle relaxants (such as Soma or Flexeril)
- Hypnotics (such as Ambien or Lunesta)
- Other prescription opioids

LEARN MORE: poison.health.ok.gov | 405.271.3430
OPIOIDS FOR ACUTE PAIN
GET THE FACTS

Short Term Use

**FACT:** After taking opioids for just 5 days in a row, a person becomes more likely to take them long term.\(^1\)

Opioids can be addictive even if only taken for a short period of time.

**FACT:**

Kidney Stone Pain

**FACT:** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), like ibuprofen and naproxen, work just as well as opioids (and sometimes better) for kidney stone pain.\(^3\)

Opioids aren't the only treatment for acute pain from kidney stones.

**FACT:**

Back Pain Relief

**FACT:** Naproxen taken alone relieves acute low back pain and improves function just as well as when it is combined with an opioid or muscle relaxer.\(^4\)

Opioids aren't the most effective treatment for acute low back pain.

**FACT:**

Healing From a Broken Bone

**FACT:** After a minor fracture, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), like ibuprofen and naproxen, provide adequate pain relief and allow bones to heal, without introducing the risks and side effects of opioids.\(^5\) As with any medicine, NSAIDs have side effects. Doctors can offer the safest, most appropriate, and effective care for their patients.

Bones can heal properly after fractures, even when taking NSAIDs for pain.

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