

PATIENT EDUCATION MATERIAL

INFORMATION CITED FROM OPIOID911.ORG

OPIOID SAFETY NEEDS YOU!

Always follow these important safety tips:

- Never take an opioid pain reliever unless it is prescribed for you.
- Take opioids only as directed. Do not take more opioids or take more often than is prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- Do not use opioids with alcohol or any other drugs unless approved by the opioid prescriber.
- Protect and lock up your opioids in a safe place at all times, and properly dispose of any leftover medicine.
- Never share opioids with another person, it is illegal and dangerous.
- Be prepared for opioid emergencies. Know signs of trouble and what to do for opioid overmedication or overdose.

OPIOID MEDICINES CAN HAVE SIDE EFFECTS

The most common are:

- Constipation due to opioids may not go away, so you should ask your opioid prescriber about how to treat this.
- Nausea may last several days.
- Sedation – feeling mildly tired or groggy – may last a few days after starting opioids or when the dose is increased.

Less common side effects:

- Itching, dry skin, confusion, muscle twitching, dry mouth, sweating, fatigue, weakness, mild headaches – all are usually temporary.
- Allergy and addiction occur rarely to opioids taken as prescribed for pain.

Take opioid pain relievers safely:

- Never chew, cut, crush or dissolve opioid tablets, or open opioid capsules, unless you are specifically instructed to do so.
- Opioid patches must never be cut or folded, and they need to stick to the skin completely. Follow directions for use carefully.
- Do not drive or operate machinery until you know how opioids will affect you.



BE ON THE ALERT FOR...

Opioid Overmedication or Overdose

(Share this with your family and caregivers)

Overmedication Warning – Call Healthcare Provider

U.S. residents also can call the National Poison Hotline at 1-800-222-1222 at any time of day or night.

- Intoxicated behavior – confusion, slurred speech, stumbling.
- Feeling dizzy or faint.
- Feeling or acting very drowsy or groggy, or nodding off to sleep.
- Unusual snoring, gasping or snorting during sleep.
- Difficulty waking up from sleep and becoming alert or staying awake.

! CAUTION: A person who at first only seems to be overmedicated may get much worse. They should be kept awake and watched closely.

Overdose Poisoning – Call Emergency Services

Dial 911 in the U.S. or Canada

- Person cannot be aroused or wakened, or is unable to talk if awakened.
- Any trouble with breathing, such as shortness of breath, slow or light breathing or stopped breathing.
- Gurgling noises from mouth or throat.
- Body is limp, seems lifeless. Face is pale, clammy.
- Fingernails or lips turned blue/purple.
- Slow or unusual heartbeat or stopped heartbeat.

! WARNING: If a child or pet ever swallows an opioid that was not prescribed for them, it is always an emergency. Call for help immediately.
