

Opioid Pain Reliever Fact Sheet

What are opioid pain relievers?

- Opioid pain relievers are narcotic medications that reduce pain
- Some commonly prescribed opioids include oxycodone, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, codeine

Side effects

- Drowsiness, constipation, dry mouth, nausea, itching, dry skin, confusion, muscle twitching, sweating, fatigue, weakness, difficulty urinating and mild headache

Risks

- Opioids can slow reaction time which can increase the risk of accidents
- Addiction to opioids rarely happens when they taken as prescribed for short term surgical pain
- Opioids can lead to fatal overdose which is more likely if you combine opioids with alcohol or other drugs such as Xanax, Ativan or Valium

What are the signs of a problem with opioid pain relievers?

- Are you taking more than prescribed?
- Are you having trouble controlling your use?
- Are you experiencing confusion or excessive sleepiness?
- If you experiencing any of these symptoms, please notify your surgeon's office right away

Safety education

- Prescriptions for opioids cannot be faxed into your pharmacy and need to be picked up in person at the clinic
- It is ok to take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Aleve) while taking opioid pain relievers; but please check with your surgeon before taking ibuprofen as this may increase the risk of bleeding.
- Never take an opioid pain reliever unless it is prescribed for you
- Only take opioids as they are needed and not just because it was prescribed
- Always keep track of how much and when you are taking your medicines
- Protect and lock up your opioids keeping them in a safe place at all times
- Never chew, crush or dissolve opioid tablets unless specifically instructed to do so by your health care provider
- Dispose of unused medication at drop boxes in approved disposal locations, such as police station or local pharmacy. Or mix with coffee grounds or kitty litter before disposing in trash
- If you experience signs of overdose such as severe drowsiness, difficulty breathing or are unable to wake up **call 911 immediately as this is an emergency**

Do not drink alcohol, drive or operate machinery while taking these medications.