Prescription Opioids for Surgical Pain

April 2019 | DOH Pub 631-079

2018 Opioid Prescribing Requirements


What do you need to know as a patient

Prior to prescribing opioids, your health care provider may:

- Ask you to complete a risk assessment
- Ask more questions for your patient record
- Check the Prescription Monitoring Program to identify other medications or drugs of concern

Individual health care providers, practices, systems, pharmacies, and insurance companies may have more strict policies regarding opioids

Ask your health care provider questions about alternative treatment options for pain

Know your prescription, always follow instructions, and never take more than prescribed

Opioid medications can be addictive and anyone is at risk for developing an opioid use disorder. Keep yourself and others safe by limiting usage, disposing of all unused medications, and knowing how to recognize the signs of opioid use disorder.

Washington State Opioid Related Statistics

- 739 deaths (2017)
- 1,615 overdose hospitalizations (2017)
- 14,389 opioid use disorder admissions (2015)
- 324,000 individuals 12+ years who misused opioids in the last year (2016)
Common types of opioids are oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, tramadol, fentanyl, morphine, and methadone. Opioid medications may be prescribed by health care providers to treat moderate to severe pain, but can have side effects and serious health risks, such as tolerance, physical dependence, opioid use disorder, and overdose.

It is important to follow medication instructions when taking opioids and always be honest with your health care provider regarding other medications you may be taking. You should avoid consuming alcohol or operating heavy machinery when taking opioid medications.

What are the risks?
- Opioid use disorder
- Physical dependence
- Falls and accidents
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Overdose

**Risks may be greater with:**
- Pregnancy
- History of substance use
- Over the age of 65
- Mental health conditions
- Combining with other medications (example: sleep or anxiety)

Possible side effects
- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Constipation
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Withdrawal

Proper disposal
You are not required to use all of your opioid medication. To find your nearest take-back location for proper disposal of unused medications, please visit:
- takebackyourmeds.org
- med-project.org
- doh.wa.gov/safemedreturn

Safe storage
- Never share or sell your prescription opioids
- Keep opioid medications locked or in a safe location
- Keep out of reach of children and out of sight from others
- Leave in the original bottle with the label attached

Naloxone
Naloxone is a prescription medicine that briefly helps a person wake up and start breathing again after an opioid overdose. Your healthcare provider may choose to give you a prescription for this drug. For more information see stopoverdose.org