



## CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES PRESCRIPTION USE AND SAFETY INFORMATION

You may be, or may have been, prescribed opioid medication for management of your post-surgical pain. The following is information about the medications you may or will be taking for pain management and to assure that you and your surgeon comply with all state and federal regulations concerning the prescribing of controlled substances. Opioid medication is to be taken as needed in the immediate post-operative period with the intent of reducing moderate to severe pain related to your surgery. It is important that you understand the **risks and benefits** of using opioids to treat pain. Opioid drugs can be very useful, but have a high potential for misuse and addiction and are therefore closely controlled by the local, state, and federal government. Addiction to prescription medication (has in part) contributed to a serious epidemic of heroin addiction in Massachusetts. Therefore, proper, responsible and judicious use of these medications is of critical importance.

1. You doctor may discuss your pain management with other health care professionals and family members when it is deemed medically necessary in your doctor's judgment. Your doctor will also obtain information from State controlled substances databases and other prescription monitoring programs.
2. You should inform your doctor of your complete medical history and all medications you are taking, including herbal remedies, since opioid medications can interact with over-the-counter medications, and other prescribed medications, especially cough syrup that contains alcohol, codeine or hydrocodone.
3. Please advise your doctor if you have ever been diagnosed with Obstructive Sleep Apnea.
4. Do **NOT** take narcotic prescription medication if you are pregnant or prior to nursing.
5. If you have a history of alcohol or drug misuse/addiction, you must notify the doctor of such history since the treatment with opioids for pain may increase the possibility of relapse. A history of addiction does not, in most instances, disqualify one for opioid treatment of pain, but starting or continuing a program for recovery is a must.
6. Please discuss with your doctor if you are currently in a drug rehabilitation program and/or are currently receiving **Suboxone** or **Methadone** treatment, as this could alter your response to, and impair the clinical benefits received from, opioid medications. Your pain clinic team should be involved for any adjustments and alterations of current medications required with your pain management plan.
7. You will be seen for regularly scheduled post-surgical follow up visits, and on an as needed basis, and given prescriptions for enough medication as judged appropriate through the peri-operative period.
8. Prescriptions for pain medicine or any other prescriptions will be provided only during an office visit or during regular office hours. **No refills of any narcotic medications will be provided during the evening or on weekends.**

- 9. You should take your prescription medication only as directed by your doctor.** You understand that if your prescription runs out early for any reason (for example, if you use more than prescribed), your doctor may elect to **NOT** prescribe extra medication for you.
10. Acquisition of any opioid medication from other physicians (which includes emergency rooms) must be disclosed to your doctor. Duplicate or redundant opioid prescriptions will **NOT** be provided.
11. You should not use any illicit substances, such as cocaine, marijuana, etc. while taking opioid medications. The use of illicit substances and the use of alcohol with opioid medications are contraindicated and can result in serious illness, injury, and or death.
- 12. You are responsible for keeping your pain medication in a safe and secure place, such as a locked cabinet or safe.** You are expected to protect your medications from loss or theft. Stolen medications should be reported to the police and to your doctor immediately. If your medications are lost, misplaced or stolen, your doctor will **NOT** replace the medications.
- 13. You may not give or sell your medications to any other person under any circumstances.** If you do, you may endanger that person's health. It is also against the law.
14. Drug hoarding, or uncontrolled dose escalation is prohibited.
- 15. Your medications should be disposed of properly.** Refer to [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) for more information about how to properly dispose of narcotic medication.
16. You should communicate fully to your doctor any side effects of the medications. This information allows your doctor to adjust your treatment accordingly.
- 17. There are side effects with opioid therapy, which may include, but not exclusively, nausea, vomiting, skin rash, constipation, sexual dysfunction, sleeping abnormalities, sweating, edema, sedation, or the possibility of impaired cognitive (mental status) and/or motor ability. Overuse and over dosing of opioids can cause decreased respiration (breathing) and possibly death. Drowsiness may occur when starting opioid therapy or when increasing the dosage. Refrain from driving a motor vehicle or operating dangerous machinery until such drowsiness disappears.**
- 18. Physical dependence, addiction and/or tolerance can occur with the use of opioid medications.**

**Physical dependence:** If opioid medications are abused or not taken as directed, withdrawal syndrome can occur. Withdrawal syndrome symptoms could include, but not exclusively, sweating, nervousness, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, goose bumps, heart rhythm irregularities and alterations in one's mood. It should be noted that physical dependence does not equal addiction.

**Addiction:** is a primary, chronic neuro-biologic disease with genetic, psychosocial and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestation. It is characterized by behavior that includes one or more of the following: impaired control over drug use, compulsive use, continued use despite harm, and cravings. This means the drug decreases one's quality of life.

**Tolerance:** means a state of adaptation in which exposure to the drug induces changes that result in diminishing of the drug's beneficial effects over time.