



Opioids for short-term pain: Your questions answered

1. Changes?

Non-opioid and opioid medications have been prescribed to treat your pain.



Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you can **FIRST TRY** acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and/or ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®, Naprosyn®) taken at regular intervals to manage your pain. Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to find the right medications for you. If you are still in a lot of pain, then use the opioid that has been prescribed for you. Opioids reduce pain but will not take away all your pain. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about a pain control plan and other ways to deal with pain including using ice, stretching, and physiotherapy.

You have been prescribed an opioid (narcotic): _____

2. Continue?



Opioids are usually required for less than 3 days.

As you continue to recover, your pain should be less day by day and you will need less opioids. Have a pain control plan and get in touch with your health care provider if your pain does not improve.

3. Proper Use?



Overdose and addiction can occur with opioids.

Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about how to use the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time for all pain medications. Discuss the need to avoid driving while taking opioids with your doctor. It can be dangerous to combine opioids with alcohol or sleeping/anti-anxiety pills (e.g. lorazepam [Ativan®], clonazepam [Rivotril®]).

4. Monitor?



Side effects from opioids include: constipation, drowsiness, nausea and dizziness.

Contact your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have severe dizziness or trouble staying awake. Taking opioids with alcohol, sleeping/anti-anxiety pills or cannabis (marijuana) can increase your risk of side effects. Let your health care provider know if you are taking any of these substances.

5. Follow-Up?



Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist when your pain should get better and contact them if your pain is not improving as expected, or if your pain is not well controlled.

To find out more, visit: [OpioidStewardship.ca](https://www.opioidstewardship.ca) and [DeprescribingNetwork.ca](https://www.deprescribingnetwork.ca)

It is important to:



Never share your opioid medication with anyone else.



Store your opioid medication in a secure place; out of reach and out of sight of children, teens and pets.



Ask about other options available to treat pain.



Take all unused opioids back to a pharmacy for safe disposal. Talk with your pharmacist if you have questions.

For locations that accept returns: [1-844-535-8889](tel:1-844-535-8889) healthsteward.ca

Examples of opioids used for short-term pain :

codeine

hydromorphone

morphine

oxycodone

tramadol

Notes:

© 2018 ISMP Canada



Neighbourhood Pharmacy
Association of Canada
Association canadienne des pharmacies de quartier



Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists



Société canadienne des pharmaciens d'hôpitaux

