

Safe Quantities of OPIOIDS for Short-Term Pain



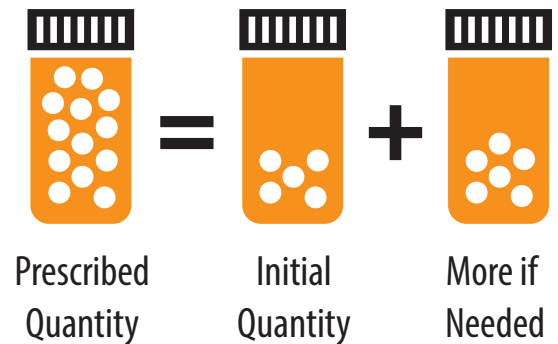
What is the problem with having too many opioid tablets for short-term pain?

Most patients don't use all the opioids they've been prescribed for short-term pain such as pain from a surgery or an injury. **Having leftover opioids in your home is dangerous for everybody.**

What can be done?

If you have been started on an opioid medication outside of a hospital, you will likely only need them for **up to 3 days**. If you have had an operation, you will likely only need them for **up to 7 days**. You only need to take them for the short time that you are in severe pain.

Instead of giving you the full quantity, the pharmacist may suggest a smaller quantity in the beginning. You can still access more if you need them, but most people don't. This will make your home safer by reducing the likelihood of you having leftover opioids.



What can I expect?

The pharmacist will ask you several questions, and together, you will find an appropriate initial quantity of tablets. If you agree to this quantity, you will be asked to sign the prescription which will be kept on file. The pharmacist may suggest using over-the-counter pain medications if they are right for you. These can be just as effective as opioids so it's better to try these first.

What if I am running out of tablets?

If you only have a 2-day supply left and are still in a lot of pain, you may need more of your prescribed amount. Call your pharmacist to discuss this further. Discuss with your pharmacist any additional fees associated with filling more of your prescribed amount.

What else can I do?

- Ask questions e.g. How many should I take? When should I stop taking them? What should I avoid?
- Talk openly about concerns. If you don't understand something, ask more questions.
- Discuss other options for pain relief with your pharmacist.

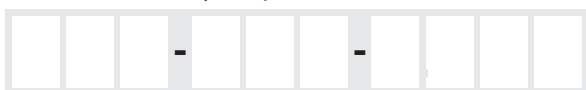


Storing all medicines in a secure place; out of reach and out of sight is important, but **especially for opioids**. These medicines can cause severe harm if taken by someone else, including children.



Return leftover opioids to any pharmacy **as soon as possible** after you've stopped taking them.

If you have any questions at any time,
call your pharmacist at:



They are medication experts and can help you.

camh
mental health is health

Centre for Addiction
and Mental Health

ismp
CANADA

Institute for Safe Medication
Practices Canada

Available from: www.ismp-canada.org/rxopioid/