

THE DANGERS OF PRESCRIPTION OPIOID MEDICATION ABUSE

Tips for taking narcotic pain medication safely and for a short duration of time

- Follow your medical provider's instructions exactly when taking narcotic pain medication to avoid dangerous side effects or the possibility of addiction.
- Tell your medical provider about all other medications you use.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medication.
- Use caution when driving or operating machinery as pain medication may cause sedation.
- Tell your medical provider immediately about any side effects.
- If your pain continues, contact your medical provider to adjust the dose or discuss using alternatives to opioids.
- Use the same network pharmacy to fill all your prescriptions.
- Do not take medication that has been prescribed for someone else.
- Stay in contact with your medical professional and report any problems or concerns you may have.
- There are other ways to treat pain, including non-narcotic pain medications. Ask your medical provider for alternatives.
- Store unused or expired medication well out of reach of children and teenagers, preferably in a locked cabinet or container. Safely store these medications to prevent them from being misused or stolen.



- To properly dispose of unused or expired medication, please take it to a special drop-off location. For a list of sites, go to: <http://bha.dhmh.maryland.gov/Pages/Prescription-Drop-Off-Collection-Sites.aspx>
- Important: Opiate overdose can now be reversed with naloxone (Narcan™). Call 911 if you feel you or someone you know is experiencing an overdose.

For more information on overdose prevention in Maryland, go to: http://bha.dhmh.maryland.gov/OVERDOSE_PREVENTION/Pages/Index.aspx

Sources:
ExpressScripts Patient Information Letter; Maryland Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Admin. (SAMHSA).

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