WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

Prescription Opioids

WHAT IS AN OPIOID

An opioid is a type of medication used to control pain, often called a narcotic. Prescription opioids are one of many options for treating severe acute pain. While opioid medications can reduce pain during short-term use, they come with serious risks.

KNOW YOUR RISKS

Opioids can have several side effects, including:

- Nausea/vomiting
- Dry mouth
- Sleepiness/dizziness
- Constipation
- Confusion
- Depression
- Itching
- Physical dependence

KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

- Pain is normal after surgery or acute injury
- Everyone feels pain differently
- Pain is usually worse 2-3 days after surgery
- Most patients use less than half of their opioid prescriptions
- Many patients do not use any of their pills
- Your prescriber will review the risks and have you sign a Start Talking form

KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Opioid Safety

- Never take opioids in higher amounts or more often than prescribed
- Do not combine opioids with alcohol or other drugs that cause drowsiness
- Never sell or share prescription opioids
- Store in a secure and out-of-reach place
- Begin tapering as soon as possible

Disposal for Unused Opioids

- Find your community drug take-back program
- Utilize prescription drug drop-off boxes at your local pharmacy or police station
- Mix drugs (do not crush) with used coffee grounds or kitty litter in a plastic bag and then throw away

You are the most important part of your health care team. Ask your provider questions, and know the facts before using opioids for your pain.

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