

## 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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