

## What you should know about opioid pain medications

\*\*\* is a long acting pain medication taken every \*\*\* hours to provide some continuous pain relief. You may still have some pain while taking this medicine that can be managed with a short acting medication.

\*\*\* is a short acting, quick relief pain medicine. You should take \*\*\* tablets every \*\*\* hours as needed for pain. You may take it together with your long acting pain medicine. It is helpful to keep a note pad and jot down how many tablets you are using every day. Also note how much relief you get after taking your pain medicine. Pain can be rated on a 1 to 10 scale, 1 being a small amount of pain and 10 being the worst pain imaginable.

**Please bring in all pain medication bottles with you to your appointment and consider keeping a pain log or diary.**

**Side Effects – most side effects are mild and wear off in several days. Call us for any severe side effects.**

- Sleepiness, nausea and dizziness can occur but usually wear off in a few days.
- Do not use opioids with alcohol or other sedating medications unless you have discussed this with your doctor or nurse.
- You should not drive until you know how you will react to these medications.
- Constipation is the most common side effect and does not wear off. Most people need to take a laxative every day to keep their bowels moving. *You should call us if you have not had a bowel movement in 3 days or you are straining with hard stools.*
- Rarely itching and trouble urinating can occur. Call us if this happens.

### **Addiction concerns**

Most patient's do not become addicted to pain medication. Please let us know if you have a current or past history of addiction to drugs or alcohol as this could increase your risk for addiction to pain medications. Addiction can occur when people take pain medications to feel “high” or to feel sedated. Let us know if this is a concern.

### **Withdrawal**

Do not stop taking these medications unless instructed to do so. Uncomfortable symptoms may occur when people who have been taking opioid pain medications, over time, suddenly stop taking them. This is normal and not a sign of addiction.

### **Tolerance**

Your body does develop some tolerance to the medication over time, but this usually requires only minor dose adjustments. We can increase your dosing as needed; if done under our care, there is no maximal dosage. Taking opioid pain medications now does not make them less effective for you in the future.

Most cancer pain can be relieved with medications. It is important to let someone know if you are not getting good relief or the side effects are keeping you from taking your medications.

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