

What if I'm taking other drugs?

Tell your health care provider and pharmacist about all other drugs you are taking. It may be extremely dangerous to combine pain medications with other prescription or over-the-counter drugs. If you have more than one provider, make sure they each know about all of the medications and drugs you are taking. This includes any vitamin supplements.

Can I drink alcohol while taking pain medication?

Talk to your health care provider. Alcohol may have unintended consequences. It could stop your breathing and cause death.

What can I do to ensure my chronic pain care continues?

Have a conversation with your health care provider about your needs and goals.

Use the space below to write questions you would like to ask your health care provider.

Washington State Department of Health Resources:

Pain Management: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/Professions/PainManagement/>

TakeAsDirected: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/takeasdirected/>

Washington Poison Center: <http://www.wapc.org/>

Federal Government Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Tips to Prevent Poisonings: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/poisonprevention.htm>.

Drug Enforcement Administration: <http://www.justice.gov/dea/>.

Medication Security:

Unintentional poisoning death rates have risen by 395% over the past 16 years. It is your responsibility to keep your medications secure in your home and while you travel. These medications are intended for you alone. You should never share them or take them from others. This is illegal. Talk to your health care provider about how to keep you and your family safe.

To dispose of unwanted medication, ask your pharmacy for a drop-off location near you. If you can't drop off unused medication, put household waste or garbage in the bottle and throw it away in its original childproof and watertight bottle. Remove the label from the bottle before disposal. Do not flush the medication down the toilet.



Contact Information:

Washington State Department of Health
Customer Service Call Center
PO Box 47865
Olympia, WA 98504-7865
360-236-4700
painmanagement@doh.wa.gov

For persons with disabilities, this document is available upon request in other formats.

PAIN MANAGEMENT



Patient Information



Do I have to consult with a pain specialist?

Not necessarily. It depends on your health care provider's experience and training, your medical history, and the plan for your care. If you do need a consultation:

- You may be referred to see a pain specialist, or
- Your health care provider may consult with a pain specialist over the telephone or electronically, or
- There may be an audio-visual evaluation done between you, your health care provider, and a pain specialist.
- There are consultation exemptions. Talk to your health care provider to see if an exemption applies to you.

Is there a listing of pain specialists?

The state does not license by specialty and does not have lists of pain specialists. State or national pain organizations may have this information.

If I need the consultation, who pays for it?

The law and rules do not specify who pays for a consultation. As with other medically necessary consultations, you should check with your insurance carrier or referring provider.

What are some signs of pain medicine overdose?

Trouble breathing, confusion, can't wake up, blue lips or blue fingernails, clammy or cool skin. More serious effects include seizure and coma. An overdose may result in death.

Can I keep my current health care provider?

Yes. The law and rules do not require that you change your health care provider. Your health care provider does not have to stop seeing you. Under certain circumstances your health care provider may seek consultation from a pain specialist.

What does my health care provider have to do to keep caring for me and my chronic pain needs?

It depends on your health care provider and the status of your care and needs. You should talk to your health care provider.

- He or she may need some continuing education on pain management.
- He or she may need to consult with a pain specialist, or you may be referred to a pain specialist for a consultation.
- If your care and pain are stable, and you are on the same dosage of medication, your health care provider might only have to document this status in your patient record.

What are opioid prescription pain medicines?

Opioids are medicines that a health care provider prescribes to relieve moderate to severe pain. Some examples of these controlled substances are fentanyl, oxycodone, methadone, hydrocodone, and morphine.

Do I have to change my pain medicine?

The rules do not require a change. That is a decision between you and your health care provider.

Why is the state doing laws and rules on pain management?

Pain management care often includes the use of opioid drugs. Overdose deaths and hospitalizations involving prescription pain medicines have dramatically increased in Washington State over the last 16 years. The Washington State legislature is concerned with this trend and in 2010 passed a law in response to these concerns. The intent is to keep you safe and give your health care provider the best practices in pain management.

What professions are impacted by the law and rules?

Five boards and commissions were required to adopt rules on chronic pain management. The impacted professions are:

- Physicians
- Physician assistants
- Osteopathic physicians
- Osteopathic physician assistants
- Advanced registered nurse practitioners
- Dentists
- Podiatrists

When is this effective?

The law was effective June 20, 2010. The rules are effective:

- July 1, 2011 for osteopathic physicians and physician assistants, advanced registered nurse practitioners, dentists, and podiatrists; and
- January 2, 2012 for medical physicians and physician assistants.