

# Prescription Opioids for Subacute Pain (Pain lasting six to twelve weeks)

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## 2018 Opioid Prescribing Requirements

Between the years 1999 to 2016, over 200,000 people in the United States died from a prescription opioid related overdose (CDC, 2017). A Washington State law passed in 2017 requiring opioid prescribing rules be written in response to the statewide opioid crisis.



739 deaths (2017)



1,615 overdose hospitalizations (2017)



14,389 opioid use disorder admissions (2015)



324,000 individuals 12+ years who misused opioids in the last year (2016)

### Washington State Opioid Related Statistics

Opioid medications can be addictive and anyone is at risk for developing an opioid use disorder. Keep yourself and others safe by limiting usage, disposing of all unused medications, and knowing how to recognize the signs of opioid use disorder.

## What you need to know as a patient

- Individual health care providers, practices, systems, pharmacies, and insurance companies may have more strict policies regarding opioids
- Know your prescription, always follow instructions, and never take more than prescribed.
- When opioids are taken over a long period of time, your body may become dependent on them. Opioids may also become less effective over time as your body becomes used to them.
- Continued use of opioids during treatment for subacute pain may transition to chronic opioid use.
- Ask your health care provider about alternative treatment options for pain.
- You can refuse an opioid medication at any time. Your provider must honor this request unless you revoke it.

Common types of opioids are oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, tramadol, fentanyl, morphine, and methadone. Opioid medications may be prescribed by health care providers to treat moderate to severe pain, but can have side effects and serious health risks, such as tolerance, physical dependence, opioid use disorder, and overdose.

It is important to follow medication instructions when taking opioids and always be honest with your health care provider regarding other medications you may be taking. You should avoid consuming alcohol or operating heavy machinery when taking opioid medications.

## Be informed. Be aware. Never share.



### What are the risks?

- Opioid use disorder
- Physical dependence
- Falls and accidents
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Overdose

### *Risks may be greater with:*

- Pregnancy
- History of substance use
- Over the age of 65
- Mental health conditions
- Combining with other medications (example: sleep or anxiety)



### Safe storage

- Never share or sell your opioid medications
- Keep opioid medications locked or in a safe location
- Keep out of reach of children and out of sight from others
- Leave in the original bottle with the label attached



### Possible side effects

- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Constipation
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Withdrawal— As a side effect for abruptly stopping opioids



### Proper disposal

You are not required to use all of your opioid medication. To find your nearest take-back location for proper disposal of unused medications, please visit:

- [med-project.org](https://www.med-project.org)
- [doh.wa.gov/safemedreturn](https://doh.wa.gov/safemedreturn)



### Naloxone

Naloxone is a prescription medicine that briefly helps a person wake up and start breathing again after an opioid overdose. Your healthcare provider may choose to give you a prescription for this drug. For more information see [stopoverdose.org](https://www.stopoverdose.org)