

## Facts about Opioid Pain Medications

- Prescription opioids carry serious risks with long-term use
- Opioid overdose can result in slowed breathing and sudden death
- Prescription opioid medications, when taken as directed, may cause some side effects like nausea, vomiting, constipation, confusion, sleepiness, depression, and dizziness
- You may develop tolerance when taking opioid pills, meaning you might need more pills for the same pain relief
- You may become physically dependent on opioid pills, meaning you will have withdrawal symptoms if you stop taking them

### **You are at greater risk for side effects from opioid pills if you are 65 or older and have:**

- A history of drug misuse, substance use disorder, or overdose
- A mental health condition like depression or anxiety
- Memory loss or dementia
- Problems walking or have experienced falls or dizziness
- Sleep apnea

### **You should avoid alcohol if you are taking opioids. Unless indicated by your healthcare provider, you should avoid the following medications while taking opioid pills:**

- Benzodiazepines (such as Xanax, Lorazepam, or Valium)
- Muscle relaxants (such as Soma or Flexeril)
- Hypnotics (such as Ambien or Lunesta)
- Other prescription opioids

### **There are other medications and therapies that may help manage your acute and/or chronic pain such as:**

- Tylenol, Ibuprofen, and Aleve
- Some medications used for depression or seizures (such as Gabapentin or Lyrica)
- Physical therapy, Yoga, Tai Chi, exercise, or mindfulness meditation
- Cognitive behavioral therapy -- where you learn how to change physical, behavioral and emotional triggers of pain and stress

### **While you are taking opioid pills for acute or chronic pain, pay attention to the following:**

- Never take opioid pills in greater amounts or more often than ordered
- Make sure you know the name of your medications and how much and how often to take it
- Follow up with your healthcare provider regarding managing your pain.
- Never sell or share your opioid pills
- Never use another person's opioid pills
- Store your opioid pills in a secure, locked place out of the reach of others
- Safely dispose of unused prescription opioid pills in drug-take-back-bins or take them to your local pharmacy
- If you take opioid pills, take only as directed and ask your doctor or local pharmacist about Naloxone for use in case of overdose

