



Narcotic Fact Sheet for Patients

Please read the information below regarding what to expect following your surgery, the goal of postoperative plan management and the side effects of the medications prescribed.

What to expect after surgery:

- Almost all surgical procedures result in some level of pain and discomfort. Pain and discomfort is generally greatest immediately after surgery and subsides as time goes on.
- Reducing your pain is a priority for caregivers
- Over time, your pain will reduce and may be eliminated completely
- Oral narcotic medication is frequently administered to patients after surgery to help control postoperative pain. It is important to note that although these medications are effective for the treatment of acute pain, use beyond that can be detrimental to your health.
- It is vital that you discontinue use of these medication as soon as your pain allows.

Narcotic medications: Facts you need to know

- Physical dependence to opioids (which means the absence of opioids can produce withdraw symptoms) can occur at prescribed doses.
- Opiate abuse is on the rise in recent years and has tripled in the US since 1990.
- 5 million people in the US are addicted to opiates.
- There are 17,000 opiate overdoses per year in the US.
- There were nearly 5 million drug related ER visits in 2010; 425,000 from narcotic pain relievers.
- Every day in the US, 46 people die of prescription drug overdoses.
- Unintentional deaths from prescription narcotics outnumber those of heroin or cocaine.
- There are now more deaths in the US from opiates than from car accidents.

Adverse reactions to opioids include:

- Sleepiness
- Difficulty controlling arms/legs
- Constipation
- Limit ability to fight infection
- Itching
- Hormonal imbalance
- Decreased breathing
- Drug Interactions
- Death

Potential risk factors for opiate abuse include:

- Age 18-34
- Male
- 4 or more opioid prescriptions
- Refilling prescriptions early
- Opioid prescriptions from 2 or more pharmacies or physicians

Early symptoms of withdrawal:

- Agitation
- Anxiety
- Muscle aches
- Insomnia
- Sweating

Late symptoms of withdrawal:

- Abdominal cramping
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting

1. Ling W, Mooney L, Hillhouse M. Prescription opioid abuse, pain and addiction: clinical issues and implications. Drug Alcohol Rev. 2011 May;30(3):300-5. PMID: 21545561

2. Hall AJ, et al. Patterns of abuse among unintentional pharmaceutical overdose fatalities. JAMA. 2008 Dec 10;300(22):2613-20. PMID: 19066381

3. Gregory TB. How to safely prescribe long-acting opioids. J Fam Pract. 2013 Dec;62(12 Suppl 1):S12-8. PMID:24340341

4. Hill KP, Rice LS, Connery HS, Weiss RD. Diagnosing and treating opioid dependence. J Fam Pract. 2012 Oct;61(10):588-97. PMID: 23106060

5. White AG, Birnbaum HG, Schiller M, Tang J, Katz NP. Analytic models to identify patients at risk for prescription opioid abuse. Am J Manag Care. 2009 Dec;15(12):897-906. PMID: 20001171

6. Painkiller Addiction Impacts Your Children <http://www.percocetabusehelp.com/painkiller-addiction-impacts-your-children>

7. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings, NSDUH Series H-44, HHS Publication No. (SMA)12-4713, Rockville, MD