

## Opioids will affect your reflexes and reaction times as well as make you drowsy.

If you have taken opioids (especially immediate-release):

- **Do not drive, ride a bike or operate machinery for 12 hours.**
- **Do not make important personal or business decisions or sign legal documents.**
- Be cautious with tasks that need you to concentrate.
- Do not drink alcohol or take sleeping tablets.
- Do not take more tablets than have been prescribed.

### Precautions and Side Effects:

Opioids are recommended for short term acute pain management. Opioids can also harm long term health, such as altering hormone levels that could lead to broken bones and changes in immune function leading to increased risk of infections.

They can be habit-forming or addictive; this is why it is important to actively reduce the dose you are taking as your condition improves. Increases in opioid doses can increase pain and make it harder to control.

<p><b>Opioids can cause constipation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink lots of fluids</li> <li>• Use laxative medication such as Coloxyl or Movicol if required.</li> <li>• Exercise or move about as much as possible.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Before you take opioids, you must notify your doctor or pharmacist if you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have any allergies to medications, particularly other pain medications.</li> <li>• Have any other medical conditions.</li> <li>• Are pregnant or breast-feeding.</li> <li>• Take other regular medications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Go to the Emergency Department if you have any of the following after taking opioids:</b></p> <p>Severe dizziness, drowsiness, disorientation, confusion OR difficulties breathing.</p>	
<p><b>Storage:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never give your medications to anyone else.</li> <li>• Store your medications in a safe place (preferably locked), out of the reach of children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Disposal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Your opioids should be taken to your GP or community pharmacy for safe disposal once no longer needed for the condition in which it was prescribed.</b></li> </ul>



# Managing your Acute Pain

## Information about your pain medications and how to use them safely

Pain is a personal experience that can sometimes be better managed by things other than medicine. Pain is not just a physical sensation. It is influenced by attitudes, beliefs and social factors, and can affect emotional and mental wellbeing.

**This pamphlet is a general guide for patients prescribed opioids for short-term acute pain relief.**

**Please ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about your medications.**

**Take this pamphlet along to your follow up General Practitioner (GP) visit**



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## What is acute pain?

Acute pain lasts for a short time and occurs following surgery or trauma or other condition. Acute pain usually improves as the body heals.

## What is an opioid?

An opioid is a medicine used to treat strong pain. Opioids are medicines such as Endone, Temgesic, Palexia and Sevredol.

*For pain experienced beyond 3 months, your GP can refer you to the Sunshine Coast Persistent Pain Service for help.*

## When do I need to take pain medications?

Do you have pain at rest?

Can you do activities such as walking or deep breathing easily?

Aim of pain relief is NOT to be pain free but able to do activities of daily living.

## Functional activity scale (FAS)

### If you have no limits to your activity:

- Try non-drug methods

### If you have mild to moderate limitation to your activity:

- Continue to use non-drug methods
- Take paracetamol regularly
- If recommended, take anti-inflammatory medication as required
- **Pace your activities**

### If you have severe limitation to your activity:

- Continue to use non-drug methods
- Continue to take paracetamol and anti-inflammatories regularly (if recommended)
- Take your opioid medication as prescribed
- **Pace your activities**

**See your GP or attend the Emergency Department if you have severe limitations to activities despite following your personalised medication plan.**

#### References:

Endone, MIMS Online May 2020.

Oxycodone, Queensland Health, Clinical Excellence Queensland. Oxycodone, Metro North Hospital and Health Service Pain Australia, <https://www.painaustralia.org.au/about-pain/what-is-pain>

## Non-drug methods of pain relief:

- Use hot/cold packs on painful or inflamed areas.
- Change the position of your body.
- Use distraction techniques such as read a book, listen to music or watch a movie.
- Pace your activity based on your pain levels.

*Patient identification sticker*

## Steps to manage your pain:

### Paracetamol (Panadol, Panamax)

1000 mg (e.g. 2 (500mg) tablets) of paracetamol regularly every 4-6 hours (Maximum of 4000 mg (8 tablets) in a 24 hour period). Note: if you weigh less than 65kg or are older than 80 years of age your maximum safe dose of paracetamol is 3000 mg (6 tablets) in a 24 hour period.

### Anti-inflammatory

#### Ibuprofen (Nurofen, Advil) OR Celecoxib (Celebrex)

400mg (e.g. 2 (200mg) tablets) of ibuprofen every 6-8 hours (Maximum of 1200mg (6 tablets) in a 24 hour period. OR

200mg (e.g. 1 (200mg) capsule) of celecoxib once a day (Maximum of 200mg (1 capsule) in a 24 hour period). This dose may vary depending on your medical condition.

\*Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking ibuprofen, celecoxib or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g. Mobic, Indocid, Naprogesic)

### While you still have severe limitation to activity take:

Opioid name: \_\_\_\_\_

Take \_\_\_\_mg (\_\_\_\_ tablet) every \_\_\_\_\_ hours if required until \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

Maximum \_\_\_\_mg (\_\_\_\_ tablets) in a 24 hour period.

Decrease dose to \_\_\_\_mg (\_\_\_\_ tablet) every \_\_\_\_\_ hours if required until \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

Maximum \_\_\_\_mg (\_\_\_\_ tablets) in a 24 hour period.

Other pain medications (e.g. regular (slow-release) opioid weaning schedule, medicines for nerve related pain):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Review the ongoing need for this medication with your GP within 3 days.