

Questions to Ask:

- 1. Why do I need this medicine?** Ask your health care provider for reasons why it is right for you.
- 2. Are there other options that will address my pain?**

Opioids are not the only option for treating pain.

 - Other options are available. An over-the-counter pain reliever (such as Tylenol, Aleve, or Advil) may be enough.
 - Physical therapy or chiropractic care could give the same results.
- 3. How long do I take this?** Extended opioid use can increase the risk of dependence and addiction. Talk with your health care provider about how long you should take the medicine and if it should be refilled.
- 4. Does this medicine line up with current guidelines and state law?** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published specific guidelines, directing health care providers to prescribe the lowest dose for the shortest length of time possible.
 - **Adults:** No more than a 7 day supply for first time prescriptions.
 - **Minors:** No more than a 5 day supply.
- 5. What are my risks for addiction?** Some people may be more prone to addiction than others.
 - A report published by the CDC suggests that the risk of chronic opioid use rises with each additional day after the third day, with a steep rise after the fifth day.
- 6. How does this medicine mix with other medicines I'm taking?** Opioids can be deadly when mixed with other drugs, especially those taken for treatment of anxiety, sleeping disorders and seizures.
 - It is a bad idea to mix alcohol with an opioid pain reliever or muscle relaxants.
- 7. What are the expected side effects?** Those vary. They might include feeling sick to your stomach, sleepiness, extreme excitement, itching and more.



UConn School of Dental Medicine
263 Farmington Avenue
Farmington, CT 06030



Connecticut Department of Public Health
Office of Injury & Violence Prevention
860-509-8251
www.ct.gov/dph/injuryprevention

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OPIOID OPT-OUT FORM PATIENT GUIDE

Voluntary Non-Opioid Directive Form



Your Voluntary Non-Opioid Directive may be cancelled — verbally, or in writing — for any reason or at any time, but only by you or your guardian or health care proxy, also known as health care representative.

The Opioid Crisis

What are opioids?

Opioids are drugs that act on the nervous system to relieve pain. Opioids are types of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and prescription pain relievers, such as codeine, morphine, oxycodone, hydrocodone, and many others.

What are the risks?

When opioids are used continuously, it may lead to physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms. The opioid epidemic has come with many devastating results, such as opioid misuse and overdoses. According to statistics from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, in 2016, 116 people died every day from opioid-related drug overdoses, 11.5 million people misused prescription opioids, and 42,249 people died that year from overdosing on opioids.

CHANGE
the **SCRIPT**

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Don't Want to Be Prescribed an Opioid Drug? We've got you covered.

- The opioid opt-out form, also known as, Voluntary Non-Opioid Directive Form, tells your health care provider that you **DO NOT** wish to be issued a prescription or medication order for an opioid drug.
- Complete and file the form provided with your health care provider. Upon receipt of this form from you, a health care provider shall document receipt of the form in your health record.
- The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) recommends completing the form with your primary care providers or substance use disorder (SUD) treatment providers; however, such consultation is not required for the form to be valid.
- This form will be valid even if you cannot tell them yourself. This could happen if you are: **in a coma, seriously injured, terminally ill, or having severe dementia.**

It is best if you carry a paper or electronic copy of this form with you at all times!

- If you go to an emergency room or are admitted to a hospital, the staff may ask if you have a Voluntary Non-Opioid Directive or they may have a form there for you to fill out.
- Your health care provider will sign the form to accept when they receive it and will place it in your medical record. Be sure that each of your health care providers has a copy of the form. This is very important if you receive health care from an out-of-state provider.
- If you need to assign a health care representative, visit the Office of the Attorney General's web site for more information: www.portal.ct.gov/AG/Health-Issues/Connecticuts-Living-Will-Laws.
- If you travel out-of-state, be sure to carry a paper or electronic copy of your Voluntary Non-Opioid Directive. Make sure your health care representative has a copy which they can share with your health care provider if needed.

Talk With Your Health Care Provider

Every patient should ask questions when getting a new medication. This is important when your health care provider prescribes you medicine for pain, which may include an opioid, such as: hydrocodone, hydrocodone/acetaminophen, oxycodone, tramadol, hydromorphone, oxymorphone, methadone, or codeine.

What should you ask to find out exactly what you are getting for pain relief?

Your conversation could begin like this:

- "My condition is causing pain."
- "How long should I expect the pain to last?"
- "What medication are you giving me?"
- "Is it an opioid?"
- "What are the side effects?"
- "Are there other non-opioid options that can help with pain relief while I recover?"

