

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Pain Center:
206-598-4282

Clinic Hours:
Monday to Friday
8.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

After hours call:
206-598-6190

Overdose

- Get help right away if symptoms of overdose occur.
- Symptoms include:
 - Confusion.
 - Seizures.
 - Severe dizziness.
 - Cold, clammy skin.
 - Very slow or difficult breathing.
 - Slowed heartbeat.



Patient Education

Multidisciplinary Pain Center

Medication Management

Opioid medication

Purpose

Opioids, such as morphine and oxycodone, are strong medicines that are prescribed for moderate to severe pain. Treatment goals are to reduce pain and improve your ability to function. Because the experience of pain is highly individual, the dose of these medicines will be different for different people.

Correct Use

It is important to take your medicine exactly as prescribed by your provider. Opioid medicines can be very useful, but also have potential for misuse and are therefore prescribed according to strict rules. If too much is taken, it may lead to medical problems because of an overdose.

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MEDICAL CENTER
UW Medicine

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Medication Refills

Always call the Clinic Refill Line 14 days before your next refill is due to allow for adequate processing time: 206-598-2354.

Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, a medicine may cause unwanted effects. The most common side effects of opioid pain medicines are:

Constipation

- To prevent constipation, drink plenty of fluids and eat foods such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Favor foods and drinks that have helped to move your bowels in the past.
- Regular exercise such as walking helps, too.
- You may need to take a stool softener or other laxative if constipation is a problem.

Nausea and Vomiting

- If this happens, the symptoms usually pass within a few days.
- Taking medication with food may help if you are having trouble with upset stomach.

Drowsiness

- You may feel drowsy, lightheaded, or have slowed reaction times at first. These feelings will often pass after 2 to 3 days.
- Make sure you know how you react to this medicine before you perform activities that require you to be alert, such as driving a car or using sharp objects.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking opioid medication.

- If drowsiness persists, contact your provider. You may need to have your dose adjusted.

Changes in Breathing

- Opioids may cause a decrease in the rate and depth of breathing.
- If you breathe less than 8 times a minute, call your provider.

Potential Risks**Tolerance**

- Over time, many people find that their bodies become used to the medication. Therefore, it is critical that other ways of working with pain are used as well.
- Different methods for managing pain include stretching, strengthening, relaxation, etc.

Withdrawal

- If you have been taking this medicine regularly for several weeks or more, do not stop taking it suddenly.
- When you stop taking opioids, gradual tapering is recommended to prevent withdrawal symptoms.
- Withdrawal syndrome may produce symptoms such as
 - Body aches.
 - Restlessness.
 - Anxiety.
 - Perspiration and/or chills.
 - Nausea and/or vomiting.
 - Diarrhea.

Remember to inform your healthcare provider of all medications you are currently taking.