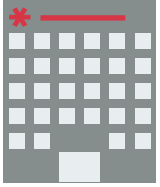


# MANAGING PAIN AND OPIOID MEDICINES



## In hospital

Pain is a common experience when you are in hospital. Talk to hospital staff about how pain is affecting you, so that they can help keep you as comfortable as possible.

There are many ways to treat pain, with and without medicines such as paracetamol and ibuprofen.

You have been prescribed an opioid, a type of pain medicine (eg, oxycodone, tramadol, morphine). These medicines work well for short-term pain but they have significant side effects and can be addictive.

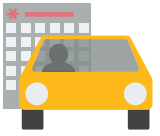


**Ask your  
health  
professional**

**How long will the pain last?**

**How much will this medicine  
reduce the pain?**

**It's important to only use opioids for the shortest time and at the lowest dose possible.**



## Leaving hospital

Before you leave hospital, make sure you ask your health professional these **5 questions** and any others you may have.

**1 What is causing the pain?**  
The cause of the pain and how long it is expected to last depends on your situation.

**2 What are the risks and benefits of this medicine?**  
Opioids reduce pain – they won't take the pain away completely. Any benefit needs to be weighed against potential harms. Opioids have major side effects, including the possibility of dependence and overdose.

**3 How long should I take this medicine?**  
Opioids should only be used for the shortest time and at the lowest dose possible. Discuss with your doctor or pharmacist when you can lower your dose or stop the medicine altogether.

**4 Are there other ways to manage the pain?**  
There are lots of effective and safer ways to manage pain, such as building activity slowly, gentle exercises and relaxation. Most people need to use a combination of strategies.

**5 What is my pain management plan?**  
Work with your health professional to develop a plan that works for you. You can use the pain management plan template over the page.



**Choosing Wisely  
Australia**

An initiative of NPS MedicineWise



## At home

Use these top tips to keep you and others around you safe while you are taking opioids.



Do not share your medicine with others



Keep out of reach of children and pets



Opioids can affect driving. It may not be safe for you to drive



Let your doctor know if you are taking other medicines that also make you feel sleepy



Take leftover medicines to your pharmacy for disposal



Opioids mixed with alcohol can make you feel very drowsy

## Pain management plan

### My goal

There are many ways you can manage pain and speed recovery. Work with your health professional to create your personal pain management plan.

Physical (body)	Psychological (mind)	Social (lifestyle)
<input type="checkbox"/> Build activity slowly <input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapy <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga or other gentle exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Massage <input type="checkbox"/> Heat or cold pack	<input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation <input type="checkbox"/> Mindfulness <input type="checkbox"/> Distraction <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stop smoking <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy eating <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> Better sleep habits <input type="checkbox"/> Stay socially active
Pain medicines		
<input type="checkbox"/> Paracetamol ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-inflammatory medicine ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Opioid ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....		
Other notes		



### Ask your health professional

When should I seek urgent medical attention?

When should I next see my doctor?