



Dear valued patient,

You probably know that the misuse of opioid (narcotic) pain medications has become a crisis in North America. Millions of Americans are addicted to these extremely powerful medications. From 1999 through 2015, more than 183,000 Americans died because of misuse of prescription opioids.

However, narcotic pain medications are an extremely important part of managing your pain after surgery. When you do not have your pain under control, it is harder to do things like deep breathing exercises, coughing and walking, which help prevent infection and are critical parts of a successful recovery.

As your healthcare providers, it is our job to make sure your pain is well-controlled while balancing the risks of opioid addiction. Our goals are to:

1. Use non-narcotic medications to manage your pain as often as possible.
2. Use the smallest dose of narcotics needed to manage your pain. We will only prescribe narcotics when needed.
3. Replace narcotic pain medications with non-narcotics and other ways to manage your pain to wean you from narcotics as quickly as possible after surgery.
4. Talk to you about your pain and how well it is controlled. If needed, we will work with the Acute and Chronic Pain Management Teams if you need extra help to feel comfortable.

As the patient, it is your job to let us know how well your pain is controlled, if you have any questions or concerns about pain management, and to be aware of the restrictions related to opioid medications after you leave the hospital:

1. Prescriptions for narcotic medications cannot be called into a pharmacy.
2. You **MUST** have a new prescription written every time you get your narcotic medications. Because of this, you cannot wait until you are out of pills before you request a refill. Call your doctor's office as soon as you start running low on pills, and call early in the day to request a new prescription. If you call after 3 p.m., your call will be returned the next business day. Once the prescription has been written, you can pick it up in person or it can be mailed to your home by registered mail. If we mail the prescription, you may be charged.
3. You may not be able to fill your prescription(s) for narcotic medications out of state. If you live outside of Ohio, please get your prescription(s) filled before you go home, even if you don't think you will need the medication(s). If you need a refill out of state, you will need to find a local doctor to write the prescription or you can travel back to Cleveland to get a prescription.
4. You must be seen by your healthcare provider if you ask for frequent prescriptions for narcotic medications. This is to check for a correctable problem such as infection or fluid build-up that may be the cause of your pain.
5. The Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS) tracks all prescriptions for narcotics and other medications that can become addictive. Cleveland Clinic is required to send OARRS information about all prescriptions for these types of medications. If you receive addictive medications from more than one doctor at doses that are too high or request refills too quickly, OARRS alerts your doctor. You will need to be seen before you can get another refill.

We are honored that you have chosen Cleveland Clinic for your care. Our goal is for you to have a successful surgery and recovery, and to keep your pain to a minimum. Thank you for your understanding as we face the challenges of prescribing narcotic pain medication in the midst of a nationwide opioid abuse epidemic.

Sincerely,

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This information is not intended to replace the medical advice of your doctor or healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider for advice about a specific medical condition.



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