

UNDERSTANDING NARCOTIC MEDICATIONS



Pain Care Associates

A Division of Neuro Pain Consultants, P.C.

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Narcotic/Opioid Medications

Your physician has prescribed a narcotic pain medication as part of your treatment. With your acceptance of this medication come certain risks and responsibilities. To understand these risks and responsibilities you must read this pamphlet, as well as ask and clarify any questions that you might have. You will also be required to sign the office narcotic agreement when a narcotic medication is prescribed. The rules to our prescription policy are itemized in this agreement.



Our Philosophy

Our goal in the use of narcotic medications is to attempt to provide a level of pain relief that will provide an improved quality of life. The expectation of 100% pain relief is unrealistic. The actual goal is to provide enough medication in combination with adjustment in activities and life style to allow the achievement of maximum pain relief. If pain is not significantly decreased and the ability to function is not significantly improved, the medication will be stopped. Narcotic medications must only be taken as prescribed. You are responsible for securing your medications and using them properly. Over-using your medications can cause overdose and death.

Terminology

It is important for one taking narcotic medication to understand the potential side effects and potential consequences that accompany narcotic usage.

Developing a **tolerance** to medication means that after a medication has been taken for a long period of time, it loses its effectiveness. This is a common occurrence with narcotic medications.

Dependence, a common occurrence associated with long-term use of narcotic medications is the result of the body becoming adjusted to the medication. The dependence by the body on the medication necessitates a weaning process when it is determined that the medication should be discontinued. Suddenly stopping narcotic medications can result in withdrawal symptoms (chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea). These symptoms are very unpleasant and can produce unhealthy results. Dependence is often confused with addiction.

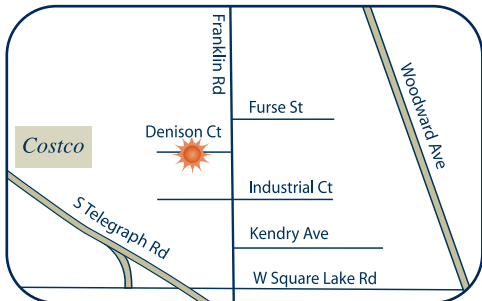
Addiction is a behavior whereby an individual uses narcotic medication improperly. The medication is taken for use other than pain relief (e.g. euphoria, sedation, insomnia, stress), and /or is not taken as prescribed (over use).

Side Effects

All medications, including narcotic medications have side effects. Narcotics can potentially produce side effects that include, but are not limited to; nausea, vomiting, itching, dizziness, lightheadedness, fluid retention, kidney disease, liver disease, constipation, reduced sexual function, dependence, over-dose, withdrawal, and for those with a predisposition to addictive behavior, addiction (improper and over use). Constipation is the most common side effect and an increase in fiber and water intake is recommended. Stool softeners may be necessary.

Proper Dosage

Narcotic medications must be taken only as prescribed by the physician ordering the medication. Any changes in usage must first be discussed with and approved by that physician. Early refills will not be authorized (stated in the narcotic agreement). Improper use of the medication can lead to adverse side effects including withdrawal and death. It is illegal to share narcotic medications with another person, especially children. Drug interactions are also possible, therefore all of your physicians need to know what medications you are taking, and only one pharmacy should be used for all your medications. Alcohol consumption or street drugs taken with narcotic medications are contraindicated and can have severe consequences including death.



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*A multidisciplinary practice
dedicated to the relief of pain.*

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