



BONUS ARTICLE

5 important questions to ask your doctor about opioids

After surgery or an injury, a doctor might prescribe an opioid to take away the pain.

Because regular use of these drugs can lead to dependence and addiction, it's important to ask your doctor some questions before having a prescription filled. These questions are recommended by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA):



1. Are there non-opioid options that could help with pain relief?

While opioids can be used to treat acute and chronic pain, they have serious side effects. The FDA recommends asking if non-opioid options are available.

2. How long should I take this medication?

Learn when and how to stop using or taper off the use of opioids. The FDA also recommends asking for the lowest dose and smallest quantity.

3. How can I reduce the risk of potential side effects?

Serious side effects can include excessive sleepiness or craving more medication. Learning to identify them can help you recognize when you need to call the doctor or go to the hospital. Never take an extra dose if you're still feeling pain; call your doctor for next steps.

4. What about other medications I am taking?

Other medications can interact with opioids, so it's important to provide your doctor with information about others you are taking. It's especially important to mention medications used to treat anxiety, sleeping problems, or seizures.

5. What should I do with unused opioid medicine?

Leftover opioids should never be stored and saved for later. The drugs could be abused by a friend or relative or lead to an accidental overdose. They should be taken to a drug take-back program in your community or a permanent collection site. ♦