

What other precautions should I take whilst on opioid medication?

While on opioid medication, remember:

- If you miss your dose take it as soon as possible.
- Do not take two doses together - even if you miss a dose.
- Only you can take the opioid medication that is prescribed for you.
- Never sell or share your opioid medication, and never use another person's opioid medication
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Do not drive, operate heavy machinery or ride a bike.
- Do not make any important personal or business decisions.
- Take care with potentially hazardous jobs at home, such as cooking or boiling the kettle.

Am I at risk of becoming addicted to opioid medication?

Addiction to opioid medication may happen but a short-term course of opioid medication will not lead to addiction or physical dependence if you use it as directed.

If you are taking more than your prescribed dose of opioid medicine, please contact your GP immediately and ask for advice.

The information in this leaflet is intended as a general guide only. Please contact your GP or pharmacist if you have any questions about any of the information above.

The information in this leaflet will be reviewed in September 2022.

Useful information:

www.rcoa.ac.uk/faculty-of-pain-medicine/opioids-aware

www.britishpainsociety.org/static/uploads/resources/files/Taster_for_web_Aug_2017.pdf



What you need to know about taking short-term opioid medicine

This leaflet reviews some important safety information about opioid medication.

Your family, friends and caregivers can help you to use opioid medicine safely. Share this information with them.

What is opioid medication?

Opioid medication provides pain relief. Opioid medication is used to treat pain after surgery. Pain after surgery is normal and to be expected. It is important to remember that you have been prescribed:

Name _____

dose _____ for _____ days

Please follow the instructions on the medication label. Take your opioid medication with or without food.

Why am I prescribed opioid medication?

You have been prescribed opioid medications as you have acute pain – sudden and severe pain that lasts for a relatively short period of time. Opioid medication can relieve this type of pain. Your opioid medication aims to reduce your pain to a level where you can do your daily activities. Pain normally gets a little bit better each day as you recover.



What are the possible side effects?

Like most medicines, you may experience some side-effects when taking opioid medication.

Common side effects include:

- dizziness
- drowsiness
- constipation
- dry mouth
- itching
- nausea and vomiting
- strange dreams or hallucinations

If you, your family, or your caregiver are concerned about any side effects you may have, please contact your pharmacist or GP (doctor) as soon as possible.

How should I store my opioid medication?

- Keep it in its original packaging and locked in a safe place at home. Keep it out of reach and sight of children, adolescents and pets.

How should I dispose of my opioid medication?

- To dispose (get rid) of unused opioid medication, return it to your pharmacist. They will dispose of it safely for you.

What other pain relieving medication can I take with my opioid?

You may have been prescribed other pain relieving medication. It is safe to take paracetamol or an anti-inflammatory (for example: ibuprofen) medication with your opioid medication, but make sure you follow the directions on the packaging.

Unless you have been told it is safe to do so, when you are taking this short-term prescription **do not take:**

- any sedative medications (to calm you or help you sleep)
- any over-the-counter codeine products (for example: Solpadeine or Nurofen Plus)
- other previously prescribed opioids (for example: Tramadol or Tylex)

What should I do if my pain continues or gets worse?

Please seek medical advice from your GP if your pain does not improve or gets worse after you have finished your short-term opioid prescription.