

About Opioid (Pain) Medication

We are committed to the well-being and safety of all our patients, which is why we are focusing on specific measures for *all* of our patients on opioid (pain) medication.

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and State of Michigan recently added new opioid (pain) guidelines which the State of Michigan used to develop new laws. These guidelines help to increase patient safety for all patients taking opioid (pain) medication.

Pain relief is an important goal for your care. Opioids may not be the best answer.

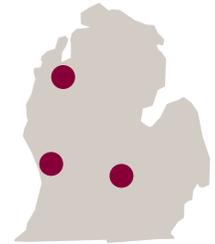
Research has shown that long-term use of opioid medications, particularly at high doses, is often not the best treatment. Although opioids do help some people at the beginning, better relief is usually achieved through other treatment options.



MORE THAN 183,000 DIED

in the US from an overdose of opioid pain medication from 1999–2015 (CDC 2017)

This equals the populations of Ann Arbor, Holland and Traverse City.



Safety Measures

- **Signing** a Controlled Substance Agreement each year.
- **Providing** a Urine Drug Screen every 12 months and randomly as requested.
- **Understanding** that your provider will be checking on the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program database regularly to see what opioids you receive.

Better Ways to Relieve Chronic Pain

Other treatments have been shown to work well and are less dangerous. They are more likely to help you deal with your pain and still have a good quality of life.

Understanding how pain affects your mind and body, learning new coping skills, trying other medications or participating in different types of therapy can all be helpful.

We will walk with you each step of this journey!

Potential Risks or Side Effects of Opioid Treatment

Physical Side Effects

Physical side effects may include mood changes, drowsiness, nausea, constipation, urination difficulties, depressed breathing, itching, bone thinning and sexual difficulties.

Physical Dependence

Sudden stopping of an opioid may lead to withdrawal symptoms including abdominal cramping, diarrhea, pain, sweating, anxiety, irritability and aching.

Tolerance

A dose of an opioid may become less effective over time even though there is no change in your physical condition. If this happens repeatedly, your medication may need to be changed or discontinued.

Addiction

Addiction is more common in people with a personal or family history of addiction but can occur in anyone. Signs may include drug craving, uncontrolled use, and taking more pills than prescribed.



Hyperalgesia

Hyperalgesia is an increased sensitivity to pain caused by the long-term use of opioids which may require a change or discontinuation of medication.

Overdose

Overdose is taking more than the prescribed amount of medication or using it with alcohol or other drugs which can cause you to stop breathing, resulting in coma, brain damage or even death.

Patients with chronic pain who use opioids with benzodiazepines (Ativan,[®] Valium,[®] Restoril,[®] Xanax,[®] etc.) and/or alcohol are at higher risk for overdose. Opioids can suppress your body's drive to breathe — this is what causes overdose deaths, especially when mixed with alcohol or other drugs.

Sexual Problems

Opioids are known to effect hormone production from sex glands, leading to less desire and poor sexual performance, breast enlargement in men, and stopping of menstrual cycles in women.

Risks to Unborn Child

Opioids may cause physical dependence of the baby at birth and possible increased risk for addiction later in life.

Keep Others Safe

Store opioids in a safe and secure place. Make sure that pets, children, friends and family cannot get to them. When you are done using opioids, please contact your pharmacy to learn how to properly dispose of them.

Please ask our staff if you have any questions. Having a team behind you often produces the best results!