
Narcotic Drug Patient Education

Patient Name: _____ PID#: _____

Name of provider conducting informed consent: _____

Your Health Condition: You are having problems with pain. You are being prescribed narcotic drugs (pain-killers) for the following reason: _____

The Purpose of Narcotic Medication: Narcotics are a type of drug that should help with your pain and let you be more active in your daily life. It is not expected that your pain will go away completely. There are risks linked with these drugs, including side effects. It is important for you to be honest with your doctor about your pain and the dose you are taking.

Risks and Common Problems: There are risks linked to narcotic drugs, which include but are not limited to:

- **Addiction:** There is a risk that you may become addicted to narcotic drugs. This means that you want the drug and will try very hard to get it, even if it causes you harm or problems in your life. This chance is greater in people who are young, have a mental illness, have been addicted to any drug in the past, or have a close relative who has been addicted to a drug in the past. Your provider may refer you to other health care providers to help you avoid addiction.
- **Allergic reaction:** Allergic reactions can happen. These include minor reactions such as a rash or severe reactions such as swelling of your tongue or throat. A severe allergic reaction is a medical emergency that can cause death.
- **Incomplete pain relief:** The dose of narcotic drugs you are on may not take away all of your pain. Tell your doctor if you are still having pain. Your provider may change your dose.
- **Physical dependence:** You may not feel well if your dose is decreased too much or if you suddenly stop taking narcotic drugs. You may have a runny nose, yawning, goose bumps, stomach pain, loose stools, or body aches, or you may feel easily bothered.
- **Side effects:** There are many side effects of narcotic drugs. You may feel itchy, dizzy, or sick to your stomach. You may have changes in your mood or energy level. You may vomit. You may have trouble having a bowel movement. Your provider may prescribe medications to help with some of these side effects.
- **Slowed breathing:** If you take a dose that is too high, then you could have slowed breathing. You must only take the dose your doctor prescribes. **Do not use other drugs or drink alcohol while taking narcotic drugs.** This can cause death.
- **Slowed reaction time:** You may feel sleepy and slow to react. If this happens, then you should not drive, use heavy machines or guns, be at unsafe heights, or be caring for someone else.
- **Tolerance:** Your body could become used to the dose of narcotic drugs that your provider prescribes, and you may not get the pain relief you had before. A higher dose may not help and could cause side effects. This means other drugs should be used.

If any of the problems listed above happen to you, your provider may need to change your treatment plan.

Other Choices: If you choose not to take narcotic drugs, you may have other choices. You could take other medications to help with pain, including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), antidepressants, or seizure medications. You could also go to physical therapy or massage therapy, wear a brace, use electrical stimulator devices, or consider shots or surgery. You may wish to see a provider who specializes in pain management. You can also choose to do nothing and live with the pain that you have.

Your provider can discuss other choices with you. How well any other treatment works will depend on your specific health condition.

More Facts: There are local, state, and federal laws that your provider must follow when prescribing narcotic drugs. You will be required to show valid photo identification when picking up prescriptions for these narcotic medications at a pharmacy in the state of North Carolina. The only forms of acceptable photo identification are a driver's license, an identification card issued by the NC Department of Motor Vehicles, a military id, or a passport. You should not take narcotic drugs if you are pregnant. Narcotic drugs can raise the chance of having a miscarriage or having a baby born with a birth defect. Your baby can also be born addicted to the drug.