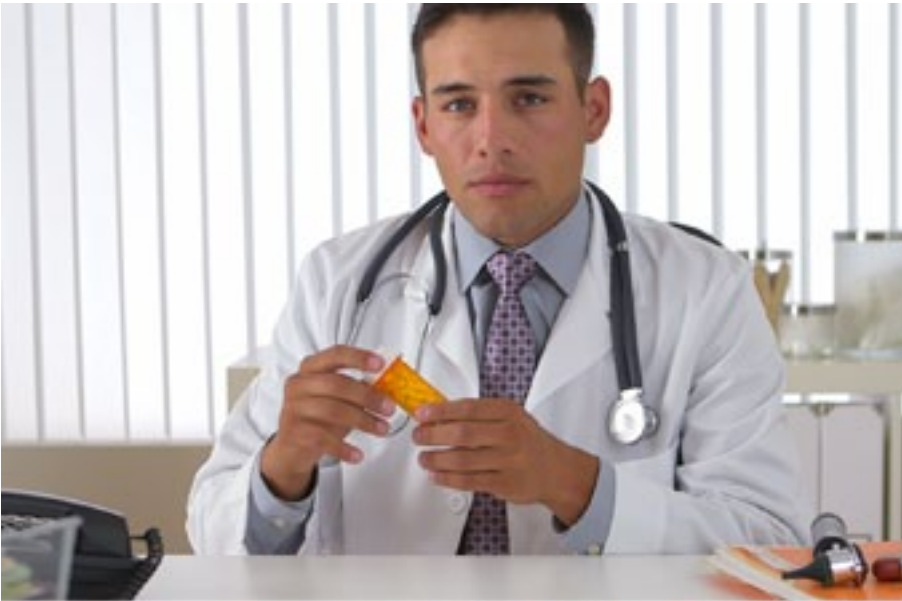


Using Opioids Safely



Overview

Opioids are powerful drugs. They control severe pain. But they can be dangerous or even life threatening if used incorrectly. Follow these guidelines for safe use.

Don't Share Opioids

First, never take an opioid that isn't prescribed to you. There are different types of opioids. Your doctor wants you to take a specific medication. Taking someone else's opioids or sharing yours with others is dangerous.

Use as Directed

Next, never change your prescribed dosage. The dosage is carefully tailored to your needs. If you're still in pain after taking your prescribed amount, talk to your doctor about it. Taking more than you are prescribed can lead to an overdose or cause death.



Be Aware of Side Effects

Opioids cause side effects such as sleepiness, dizziness, nausea and constipation. Be aware of these side effects. Don't drive, operate machinery or do anything unsafe while you are taking your medication. You could hurt yourself or others. And be aware that opioids can cause dependency and addiction. Discuss this with your doctor. If you begin to notice changes in how you feel or act, tell your doctor immediately.

Don't Mix

Taking opioids with some other drugs or alcohol is dangerous. Your breathing may slow down or stop. This can be fatal. Never mix your medication with alcohol. Never mix it with sleep aids or with medications that control anxiety. Talk to your doctor before taking any other medications or supplements while you are taking an opioid.



Control Your Medication

Carefully keep track of your opioid medication. Keep it in a safe, secure place. Keep a medication log. This helps you remember exactly when you've taken your medicine and how much you've taken. This is important information for your doctor, especially if you need to have your dosage adjusted. And when you no longer need to take your opioid, dispose of any unused medication properly.

Conclusion

If used responsibly, opioids can be an effective tool for pain control. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about your prescription.