

**Do you have ongoing pain that is not from cancer or a terminal illness?**

**If so, you probably don't need an opioid pain reliever.**



**Here's why opioids, such as OxyContin®, Percocet®, and Vicodin® usually are not the best choice:**

- They don't help what's causing your pain.
- They stop working well if you use them every day.
- They are addictive.
- They have serious side effects.
- They aren't cheap.

**How can you feel better without prescription pain relievers? Five easy ideas are on the other side.**

# Most people can manage their pain by trying these steps:

- 1 Exercise, with your doctor's guidance.**
- 2 Try physical therapy.**
- 3 Take non-prescription pain relievers like Tylenol®, Advil®, or Aleve®.**
- 4 Try massage, chiropractic care, or acupuncture from a licensed practitioner.**
- 5 Ask about other prescription medicines or treatments, such as steroid injections.**

There are still times when you might need opioid pain relievers. Talk to your provider about your symptoms.

If you do use opioids, use the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time. Opioids can be dangerous if you take high doses or combine them with other medicine or alcohol. Talk to your provider about how to use them safely.

As long as you take opioids, your provider should check you at least every three months. This is to make sure that the drugs are still helping you move easier and with less pain.



*An initiative of the ABIM Foundation*



With thanks to the American Society of Anesthesiologists

Learn more at  
[www.choosingwisely.org/patient-resources](http://www.choosingwisely.org/patient-resources)

This information is to use when talking with your healthcare provider. It is not a substitute for medical advice and treatment. Use this information at your own risk.

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