

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

If so, you probably don't need an opioid prescription.



Here's why opioids usually are not the best choice:

- They don't treat the source of what's causing your pain.
- They may stop providing pain relief over time.
- They can be addictive.
- They can have serious side effects.

How can you feel better without prescription opioids? Five easy alternative treatments are on the other side.

Most people can manage their pain by trying the following treatments:

- 1** Exercise, with your doctor's guidance.
- 2** Try physical therapy.
- 3** Take non-prescription pain relievers like acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen.
- 4** Try massage, chiropractic care, or acupuncture from a licensed practitioner.
- 5** Ask about other prescription medications 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 medications or alcohol. Talk to your provider about how to use them safely.

As long as you take opioids, you should see your provider 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

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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