

## » Opioids are supposed to help. They can also hurt.

Opioids are a type of drug prescribed to help treat pain. And, when used correctly, they can help. But, when they aren't used correctly, they cause a lot of harm. They can sometimes even lead to death. **45 people in the United States die every day from an overdose of prescription opioids.**

Because of the dangers, it is *very* important to take opioids *exactly* the way they are prescribed. It can be easy to take too many. It can also be hard to stop taking them. This is true even when they are prescribed by a professional because the way opioids interact with your brain makes them addictive.

**Please be careful.** Read this brochure to learn about taking opioids as safely as possible. You will also find information on ways to manage pain without opioids. There are things you can do at home. There are also services you can get through PrimeWest Health.

Call PrimeWest Health if you have questions about opioids or if you think you may not be using them the right way. We can find answers. And, we can connect you to services that will help.



## » Struggling? Help is available.

Opioids *are* addictive. If you have trouble keeping the balance right between your pain and your medication—or if you lose that balance—**it's not your fault. There is no reason *not* to ask for help!**

We pay for treatment for members who feel like opioids are hurting their quality of life. To learn about treatment options, all you have to do is call.

PrimeWest Health Member Services: **1-866-431-0801** (toll free)  
TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**

If you are having a crisis, always call **911**. You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255** (toll free). TTY users call **1-800-799-4889** (toll free). You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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## » Opioid safety

Pain medications, like opioids, are used to *help* with pain, not to completely remove it. Having some pain is normal after an injury or medical procedure.

If you are prescribed opioids, use them safely.

- **Take them *exactly* as directed.** Your provider will likely tell you to use the **lowest dose possible** for the **shortest time possible**.
- If you miss a dose, **do *not* take two doses** to “catch up.” Wait until your next dose is scheduled.
- **Follow up** with your provider regularly. At each appointment, ask if your prescription is still right for you. Ask what **other methods of pain control** are available.
- **Ask your pharmacist** about your medication. Be aware of side effects and possible drug interactions.
- Don't take opioids prescribed for someone else. Don't let someone else take yours. **Keep all opioids in a secure place** such as a locked cabinet.



**Sources:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), WebMD



## » Safe pain management: At home

You and your health care provider can make a pain treatment plan that includes realistic goals for pain relief and activity levels. It can also include activities that focus on the connection between mind and body. Pain affects your *whole* being — *not* just the spot where it hurts! **Ask your provider if the suggestions below are right for you.**

**Over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers.** These include acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®). Don't take them without telling your provider what other medications you take.

**Change the temperature.** Try applying ice or heat. Ice works best for recent injuries. Heat works better for long-term pain. Don't put ice or heat packs directly on your skin or leave them on too long.

**Exercise.** Chemicals that your body produces during exercise block pain signals and improve your mood. Yoga can be a great exercise for pain. It helps connect and relax your body and mind. The movements can change to match to your comfort level.

**Massage.** This can help ease muscle pain. If you can reach your sore muscles, gently massage them. If you can't, ask a friend or family member you trust.

**Cultural and spiritual practices.** Spiritual practices and traditional healing can be an important part of pain management if they are part of your beliefs. Storytelling, sage burning/smudging, sweat lodges, prayer, sacred music, and talking to a spiritual leader or healer can all help produce feelings of renewal, well-being, purification, and connection.

**Meditate.** Help your body relax through focus and deep breathing. Try it in a quiet, comfortable place.

## » Safe pain management: Through PrimeWest Health

Need help managing your pain? You are not alone. PrimeWest Health has connected many people with the services they need. Examples include the following:

- Chiropractic care
- Acupuncture
- Visits to pain specialist
- Counseling
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Case management or care coordination (help coordinating appointments and understanding coverage)

Ask your provider about trying these options. Then call PrimeWest Health. We may need to approve these services before you can get them.

Need help managing your medication? We cover treatment to help you beat addiction and get back on track with pain management. Call to learn about treatment options.

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### No English?

**1-866-431-0801** (toll free)  
TTY/TDD **1-800-627-3529** or **711** (toll free)  
**memberservices@primewest.org**

**Discrimination is against the law.** PrimeWest Health does not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sexual orientation, public assistance status, marital status, age, disability, or sex.

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# Opioids:

They can help.

They can hurt.



Learn about safe pain management and  
how PrimeWest Health can help.



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TTY users: **1-800-627-3529** or **711**  
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.