



# Rx Pain Medications

KNOW THE OPTIONS • GET THE FACTS

## Talking to Your Patients About Opioids

Discussing pain medication with your patients is critical to ensure they understand the range of options to manage their pain. Whether your patient is concerned about side effects, has a past history of substance use disorders, or may be at risk for misuse or overdose, it is important to provide clear and consistent guidance.

Pain treatment should be team-based, personalized, multi-disciplinary, and patient-centered, and health care providers should consider sharing nonpharmacologic options for pain management with their patients as appropriate. According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health,<sup>1</sup> research suggests that acupuncture can help manage certain pain conditions. In addition, some pain may be relieved through the moderate use of ibuprofen or incorporating yoga into a daily exercise routine or a prescription/referral for physical therapy.

### Consider the following points during conversations with your patients:

- Patients should not take medications more often than prescribed or outside of the recommended prescribed dosage.
- Patients need to be aware of potential interactions with other substances. They should never stop or change a dosing regimen without first discussing it with a health care provider, and they should never use another person's prescription.
- Patients should be reminded not to share or sell their personal opioid medications. They should dispose of unused medications properly and avoid keeping opioid medications around "just in case." For more information, they should refer to the FDA guidelines.<sup>2</sup>
- If you, the health care provider, subscribe to your state's PDMP, you may also wish to inform your patients that their controlled substance prescriptions will be monitored automatically in this exchange program to ensure optimal care.
- Patients should practice safe medication storage, putting medications out of sight and out of reach from children and guests.

### More Information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain: <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>
- Teens and young adults: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/consumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/ensuringsafeuseofmedicine/safedisposalofmedicines/ucm186187.htm>
- Adults: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/treatment-research/how-to-find-help-drug-abuse-problem>
- Health care providers: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/nidamed-medical-health-professionals/tool-resources-your-practice/opioid-prescribing-resources>

### NEED HELP?

Call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** for 24-hour free and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, and recovery in English and Spanish, or visit [www.samhsa.gov/find-help](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help).



<sup>1</sup> National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. (2014). Acupuncture: What you need to know. Retrieved from <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/acupuncture/introduction>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2016). Disposal of unused medicines: What you should know. Retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/consumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/ensuringsafeuseofmedicine/safedisposalofmedicines/ucm186187.htm>