

OPIOIDS FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT

Opioids and other narcotic medications play a vital role in pain management after surgery. However, **long-term use of these medications can be harmful** to your health and make them less effective when you need them most. For example, patients who are already taking opioids prior to surgery may experience more pain and respond less favorably to post-operative pain management.

Recognizing Opioid Dependency

Opioids are highly addictive and may cause dangerous health problems when overused. Even within prescribed guidelines, patients can develop physical dependence on opioids. It is very important to **discontinue use of opioids as soon as your pain allows**. Caregivers, family, and friends should be aware of warning signs and refer to a physician for assistance with pain management alternatives. Some common warning signs of opioid dependency are:

- Several opioid prescriptions
- Early refills on opioid prescriptions
- Opioid prescriptions from multiple pharmacies or physicians

Preventing Opioid Addiction

Midwest Orthopaedics at RUSH is committed to protecting our patients from opioid addiction. Both high-dosage or low-dosage opioids taken over long periods of time can increase risk of addiction, so we prescribe opioids only when necessary and attempt to limit our prescriptions of opioids after surgery as much as possible, which may include lower doses or fewer pills. For the safety and well-being of our patients, we opt for less addictive pain medication and alternative pain management options whenever possible.



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Opioid Adverse Reactions Include:

- Sedation
- Confusion
- Decreased movement and cognitive function
- Constipation
- Immune suppression
- Itching
- Hormonal imbalance
- Difficulty Breathing
- Drug interactions
- Death

How You Can Help

We all play a part in preventing opioid abuse and addiction. Patients can make a difference simply by disposing their unused drugs responsibly. You can find secure opioid disposal boxes at Rush University Medical Center and other medical facilities. Many states have also set up safe and anonymous medication disposal sites.

To locate a drop box or opioid treatment center near you, visit: rushortho.com/opioids

Please reach out to your treatment team if you have any questions or need additional assistance.



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