

# Prescription Drug Fact Sheet for Surgical Patients

As you know, after surgery, you are likely to experience some pain/discomfort. This may be treated with a short course of prescription pain medication (opioids). As part of our mission to provide you with the highest quality care, this Prescription Drug Fact Sheet is provided for your safety.

## **What you can do to stay safe:**

- **USE:** Take your medications only as directed by your doctor. DO NOT share your medications with anyone - sharing your prescriptions is illegal and could endanger other people's health. If you are taking benzodiazepines (Xanax, Valium, etc.), consult with your prescriber on the management of these medications with opioids. Combining opioids with these medications can slow or stop breathing. DO NOT mix opioid medications with alcohol. Avoid driving or operating heavy machinery until you know how your medications affect you.
- **STORE:** Store your prescriptions securely in their original containers. Keep them out of sight and out of children's reach, preferably in a locked cabinet or high shelf.
- **DISPOSE:** Unused medications are best disposed of at a take back facility/pharmacy – search for public disposal locations at <https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s1>  
Dispose of medications immediately after your pain symptoms have resolved.

## **Misuse and overdose risks:**

- When misused, prescription medications may be just as dangerous as illegal drugs.
- Misusing your medications can have serious consequences including lack of energy, inability to concentrate, physical weakness, nausea, vomiting, and suppressed breathing to the point of death. If you have not taken your medications as directed, and you experience any of these symptoms, please go immediately to an emergency room. If you feel that you have taken more medication than what was prescribed, seek immediate medical attention.
- Misusing your medications may also lead to addiction – it is imperative that you take your medications only as prescribed.
- As you recover from surgery your opioid use should decrease. If severe pain persists or your opioid requirements increase, please notify your surgeon.

## **For your safety WE DO NOT routinely:**

- Prescribe long-acting opioids except in special circumstances.
- Prescribe more than a short course of short-acting opioids.
- Refill lost, stolen or destroyed prescriptions.

## **Additional resources:**

- National Institution on Drug Abuse:  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:  
<http://oas.samhsa.gov/prescription.htm>
- FDA recommendations:  
<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/default.htm>