



Monday through Friday
8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Saturdays & Holidays
9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Sundays & Christmas
Noon to 4:00 P.M.

IT'S ABOUT PAIN

A monthly service of Kirkpatrick Family Care

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What Patients Can and Should Do to Help Reduce the Problem

1. **BE AWARE** that narcotics are dangerous “two edged swords.” They can help or harm, anybody.
2. **DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES share** even one of your pills to another person. NEVER. It is a federal crime; you are (temporarily) “practicing medicine and prescribing an opiate without a license.”
3. **KEEP your pills locked up** or at least placed where visitors (or your kids) won’t find them. One common ploy is for the abuser to “use your bathroom” and take some or all of your pills from the medicine cabinet.
4. **KEEP A COUNT of your pills.** This should start at the Pharmacy. I don’t think a pharmacist would ever short you in order to divert or personally use pills, you never know. In addition, keeping a daily count will protect against family members diverting “just a few.”
5. **COMMIT YOURSELF TO ALTERNATE MEDICATIONS.** Using anti-inflammatory pills (ibuprofen, naproxen, aspirin) or topicals (such as BioFreeze lotion, Aspercreme, SalonPas patches) may reduce the amount of opioid needed.
6. **TRY NON-MEDICINAL TREATMENTS.** Ice and heat and stretching, as well as braces and splints, may help. PHYSICAL MODALITIES MAY ALSO HELP: Physical therapy, massage therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic all help many people to get by with lower doses of pain medications. Unfortunately, most insurances (including workers comp) don’t cover these treatments very well. You can lobby the Insurance Commissioner and public officials to improve benefits for these services.
7. **REDUCE DEPRESSION;** this may also help. Most people with chronic pain get depressed because they can’t sleep well, their usual activities (including work) are hampered, and with severe pain, they just can’t concentrate. Further, with the exception of methadone and oxycodone (which elicit the strongest reaction from regulators), opioids are very expensive, even generics. Loss of wages and discretionary income, can depress most people. Counselling, antidepressants (particularly duloxetine, which is FDA approved for treating pain), and sleep aids may all help. Also vigorous exercise (if possible, but limited by injury if that’s the cause of your pain), raises brain chemicals to lessen pain and depression. Read McConnell’s *MANAGING YOUR PAIN BEFORE IT MANAGES YOU.*
8. **CONSIDER DEVICES.** Splints, braces, and TENS UNITS (buzzer) may lessen pain. In short order, they’re cheaper than prescriptions.
9. **Optimize your overall health**—eat sensibly (if you are heavy, losing weight usually lessens pain), get appropriate sleep, avoid recreational alcohol and drugs, keep your life balanced.
10. **BE A NARC.** If you are aware of a loved one stealing your medicine, call the police. If people are caught early, they’re less likely to get drawn into high use or extensive stealing or selling.