

Going home with a narcotic prescription

You may go home with a prescription for a narcotic/opioid. Commonly prescribed narcotics/opioids include codeine, hydrocodone, or oxycodone. There are things you should know about using, storing, and disposing of this medication.

How should I use this medication?

Narcotics (opioids) are intended to improve your pain enough so that you are able to do your day-to-day activities, but not reduce your pain to zero.

Many people use opioids without problems, but there is a risk of addiction. It is important to read and follow the directions on the prescription label. Use the lowest dose possible for the shortest duration of time. Do not take it more often than directed.

You may feel sleepy or dizzy while taking this medication. Your ability to drive or operate machinery may be impaired. Avoid drinking alcohol or taking benzodiazepines while taking this medication.

Your family member or caregiver needs to call 911 if:

- You can't speak clearly when you wake up
- They can't wake you up
- Your lips or fingernails are blue or purple
- You are making unusual heaving snoring, gasping, gurgling or snorting sounds while sleeping
- You are not breathing or have no heartbeat

Where should I keep my medicine?

Keep medications in a secure and safe place to protect them from theft. Keep out of the reach of children. This medicine can be abused.

Do not share this medicine with anyone. Selling or giving away this medicine is dangerous and against the law.

How should I get rid of leftover medication?

Once you no longer need your medication, dispose of it promptly. Recommendations:

1. Use a medicine take-back program (often available at commercial pharmacies or local law enforcement agencies).
2. Disposal in the household trash:

- Mix medicines in a sealable bag with an undesirable substance such as dirt, cat litter, or used coffee grounds.
- Seal the plastic bag containing the mixture and throw it in your household trash.
- Delete all personal information on the prescription label with a black marker, then dispose of the container.

For more information on safe storage and drug disposal, please visit:

- Where and How to Dispose of Unused Medicines (<https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm>)
- How to Safely Store and Dispose of Your Medications (<https://www.safemedication.com/pharmacist-insights/2021/04/26/how-to-safely-store-and-dispose-of-your-medications>)