

WHEN THE PRESCRIPTION BECOMES THE PROBLEM



Your prescribed pain medication is only for you.

Health care providers prescribe pain medications based on a person's specific symptoms and medical history. That's why these medicines must not be shared with friends or family. Take your medication as prescribed, and follow your health care provider's instructions on using pain medication with other prescriptions and non-prescription drugs.

When pain medication is misused or abused, it does more harm than good.

Common signs of pain medication misuse or abuse are:

- Failing to take your medicine as prescribed by your health care provider.
- Sharing or selling your medication.
- Taking your medicine for reasons other than prescribed.
- Missing work or school, neglecting family and friends, or endangering yourself.
- Not being honest with your health care provider, family and friends about your medication use.

Know the difference between drug tolerance and drug addiction.

TOLERANCE: When the body becomes used to a drug, it has built a tolerance that makes the drug less effective at a given dose. This is a common occurrence for people with chronic pain who use opioid-based medication such as hydrocodone, oxycodone and morphine.

ADDICTION: A person is addicted when they use a drug compulsively despite the harmful consequences. Addiction is far more than a craving and can be characterized as a disease.

Pain medications should be safely stored and properly disposed.

STORAGE: Store pain medication safely and securely—away from people and pets. Avoid using common storage areas such as bathroom medicine chests, kitchen cabinets or bedroom night stands.

DISPOSAL: Always read and follow the disposal instructions on the drug label or patient information sheet that accompanies your medication. Never flush prescription drugs down the toilet. Get rid of expired, unwanted or unused pain medication as soon as possible to reduce the chance of others accidentally or intentionally taking your medicine.

Community drug take-back programs are your best option for drug disposal. These programs allow you to bring unused drugs to a central location for safe disposal. Call your pharmacist, local law enforcement department or your local government's household trash and recycling service to see if a take-back program is available in your community.

If your community does not offer a drug take-back program, follow these steps:*

1. Mix medicines with a substance that can't be eaten such as dirt, kitty litter or used coffee grounds—don't crush tablets or capsules.
2. Place the mixture in a plastic container or bag, and tightly seal.
3. Throw the container in your household trash.
4. Scratch out and make unreadable all personal information on the prescription label of your empty pill bottle or medicine packaging, and throw these items in your household trash.

Ask your provider about other options to treat your chronic pain.

Be involved, keep your health care team updated on how your treatment is going.

If you are struggling with addiction, help is available in your area.

BIG BEND COMMUNITY BASED CARE (BBCBC): 850-410-1020

CENTRAL FLORIDA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NETWORK (CFBHN): 813-740-4811

CENTRAL FLORIDA CARES: 407-985-3560

LUTHERAN SERVICES OF FLORIDA: Access to Care Line, 1-877-229-9098

SOUTHEAST FLORIDA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NETWORK, INC.: 561-203-2485

BROWARD BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COALITION: 877-698-7794

SOUTH FLORIDA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NETWORK: 888-248-3111

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: www.myffamilies.com/service-programs/substance-abuse/get-help

*<https://archive.epa.gov/region02/capp/web/pdf/ppcpflyer.pdf>