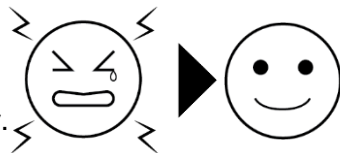


An opioid for pain? I am a kid! Is that okay?

Yes, it is.

It will help reduce your pain so you can heal faster.



It is not “doing drugs” when a doctor or nurse practitioner prescribes opioids for a medical reason.

So what is an opioid anyway?

Opioids (say *oh-pee-oyds*) are strong pain medicines that block pain messages going to the brain.

Examples of opioids are morphine (say *more-feen*) and hydromorphone (say *hi-dro-more-phone*).

How do I take the opioid?

Take the opioid exactly as prescribed.

The opioid works best when you also take regular pain medicines, such as ibuprofen (say *eye-boo-pro-fen*) or acetaminophen (say *ah-seat-ah-min-oh-fen*).

Regular pain medicine	Brand names
ibuprofen	Advil, Motrin, or store brands
acetaminophen	Tylenol or store brands

You can take a regular pain medicine at the same time as the opioid or in between the times you take the opioid.

Alert: There is a limit to how much of the regular pain medicines you can take each day, and some opioids come with these already mixed in. Ask the pharmacist what the limit is.

How long do I have to take the opioid?

Usually, you only need to take it for a few days. As you heal, your pain should be less and you will not need the opioid.

If you are worried about taking the opioid, talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner.

Are opioids safe for kids?

Yes, they are and work well when you take them exactly as prescribed.

Side effects might happen, but do not happen for everyone, such as:

- hard, dry poops that are difficult to pass
- feeling sick to your stomach
- throwing up
- being very sleepy
- getting dizzy when sitting up or standing up
- itching

These are not fun but they will not harm you. If they bother you a lot, talk to your parent, pharmacist, doctor, or nurse practitioner.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Yes. Opioids are strong and can be dangerous.

Here are ways to keep you and others safe.

- Take your opioid:
 - only as prescribed
 - only when you need it for big pain
 - only as long as you have big pain
- **Keep count** of how much you have so you always know how much is left.
- **Keep your opioid in a safe place.** Keep them out of reach and out of site of other kids and pets. The effects of opioids can be a danger to anyone not taking them correctly for controlling pain. A pet taking an opioid by accident can cause death.
- **Never share** with anyone else. You are the only person who should be taking this medicine.
- **Always return any leftover opioid** to the pharmacy.

Opioids for kids in pain: What parents need to know

Did you know?

- Taking opioids when they are prescribed for medical reasons is not “doing drugs”.
- The benefits of taking opioids outweigh the risks when taken for medical reasons.
- There is no proof that taking opioids for a short time leads to future misuse.
- You need to let your child’s prescriber know if anyone in your family has a history of substance use.

When pain is poorly treated or not treated at all, these are possible results:

- slower healing
- more likely to return to the hospital
- more likely to have chronic pain

When your child’s pain is treated, they will heal faster and need the opioids for a shorter time.

Combine opioids with regular pain medicines

Opioids work best when combined with regular pain medicines. This helps your child’s body transition off the opioid.

Caution: Some prescribed opioids already contain regular pain medicines. There are limits to how much of these regular pain medicines your child should have in a day. Check with the pharmacist on what the limits are for your child.

Ask the prescriber or your pharmacist for how best to combine regular pain medicines with the opioid.

Along with regular pain medicines, here are other ways to help ease pain:

- relaxation techniques and deep breathing
- distracting activities
- using massage
- putting heat or ice over the painful area

Put safety first

Use the information on the other side of this sheet to talk with your child about the opioid.

Check with the pharmacist as to what the limits are each day for taking regular pain medicines.

Ask the pharmacist to give you a small supply of the opioid at a time when prescribed a large number of pills.

Keep the opioid locked up and out of reach of children, youth, and pets.

Watch for side effects.

- Talk to a pharmacist about medicines for treating constipation and stomach upset.
- Call the prescriber or pharmacist if the side effects continue to bother your child.
- If your child is drowsy:
 - Do not allow them to ride a bike or operate machinery like a lawnmower.
 - Do not allow them to take part in activities where they need to be alert and awake.
 - **Call 911** if your child’s breathing is very slow and you cannot wake your child up.

Never allow anyone else to take the prescribed opioid. It is only for your child.

Return any leftover opioid to the pharmacy in a clear plastic bag so it can be safely disposed.

Who to call when you have questions:

- The prescriber of the opioid or your pharmacist
- Fraser Health Virtual Care 1-800-314-0999
Live chat online: fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare
10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., daily
- [HealthLinkBC.ca](https://healthlinkbc.ca) 24 hours a day 811 (TTY 711)