

The Opioid Crisis

? What is an opioid?

An opioid is a type of medication used to control pain, often called a narcotic. Prescription medicines like oxycodone and hydrocodone are opioids. The street drug heroin is also an opioid.

? Why are opioids dangerous?

Opioid addiction is very serious. It can happen to anyone. Misuse can result in overdose and even death.

? What do we mean by 'opioid crisis'?

Opioid misuse is a serious problem nationally and locally. In Michigan, significantly more people die annually from opioid deaths than from gun deaths or traffic fatalities. Over-prescribing opioids can lead to personal addiction and drug diversion (when people steal, sell drugs, etc.). The state of Michigan has made fighting the opioid crisis a top priority, and Spectrum Health is supporting these efforts.

? What is Spectrum Health doing about the opioid crisis?

At Spectrum Health, we are committed to being part of the solution. We have started an Opioid Task Force to help providers and patients work together to safely manage pain. We have implemented new state legislative requirements into our guidelines and workflows to assist us as we prescribe opioids safely when they are necessary and as we communicate risks and concerns openly with our patients. Spectrum Health is committed to doing its part to address the opioid crisis and to providing the safest care for our patients.

What can we as patients do about the opioid crisis?

- Talk openly with your provider about managing your pain. Ask about alternatives to pain medications.
- Never take opioids in higher amounts or more often than prescribed.
- Never share, sell or trade opioids.
- Keep your medicine in a safe place that only you know about.
- Get pain medications from one provider only.
- Get rid of all unused medications when your pain is controlled.

12 questions to ask your doctor before taking opioids

- 1 Why are you prescribing me an opioid?
- 2 Are there any non-opioids that I can take as an alternative?
- 3 How long should I take this medication?
- 4 Are there any side effects from this medication? If so, how can I reduce or prevent them?
- 5 I have a history of substance use disorder. Should I still take an opioid?
- 6 Should I start with a shorter prescription or fewer pills?
- 7 I am currently taking other prescription drugs. Is it safe to take opioids with other medication?
- 8 Is this the right medication for me?
- 9 How will this medication make me feel?
- 10 Is there a possibility that I will get addicted to this medication?
- 11 Addiction runs in my family; should I take this medication?
- 12 After I've finished this medication, how can I discard it?

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ATENCIÓN: Si usted habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1.844-359-1607 (TTY: 711).

ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اذكر اللغة، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم 1.844-359-1607 (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: 711).