

Emergency Department Guidelines for Prescribing Pain Medication

Our emergency department staff understand that pain relief is important when someone is hurt or needs emergency care. However, providing pain relief is often complex. Mistakes or misuse of pain medication can cause serious health problems and even death. Our emergency department will only provide pain relief options that are safe and appropriate.

- ▶ Our main job is to look for and treat an emergency medical condition. We use our best judgment when treating pain, and follow all legal and ethical guidelines.
- ▶ We may ask you to show a photo ID (such as a driver's license) when you check into the emergency department or receive a prescription for pain medication.
- ▶ We may ask you about a history of pain medication misuse or substance abuse before prescribing any pain medication.
- ▶ We will only provide enough pain medication to last up to three days, until you can contact your doctor or the follow-up doctor to whom you are referred. We will prescribe pain medication with a lower risk of addiction and overdose when possible.
- ▶ **For your safety, we do not:**
 - Give pain medication shots for sudden increases in chronic pain.
 - Refill stolen or lost prescriptions for medication.
 - Prescribe missed methadone doses.
 - Prescribe long-acting pain medication such as OxyContin, MS Contin, fentanyl patches, or methadone for chronic, non-cancer pain.
 - Prescribe pain medication if you already receive pain medication from another doctor or emergency department. Any exception may only be made after a urine drug test or contact with your doctor or clinic.

If you would like help, we can refer you to a drug treatment program. Or if you would like help from the Washington State Alcohol and Drug Help Line, call 1-800-562-1240.