

## Prescription Opioids

Prescription Opioids (also called narcotics) carry serious risks of *addiction* and *overdose*, especially when you take them for a long time.

### It is important for you to know:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Why your doctor ordered an opioid.     | <input type="checkbox"/> How to store the opioid.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your child's dose and when to give it. | <input type="checkbox"/> How to safely dispose of opioid.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How to give the opioid to your child.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Risks and side effects to watch for. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety rules to follow.                | <input type="checkbox"/> When to call 911.                    |

## 1. Reasons prescribed.

- Opioids are powerful pain relievers.
- Opioids treat new moderate, acute, or severe pain for a limited amount of time.

## 2. When to give a dose.

- Give the opioid exactly as ordered.
- Talk to your doctor before making any changes in the dose or time.

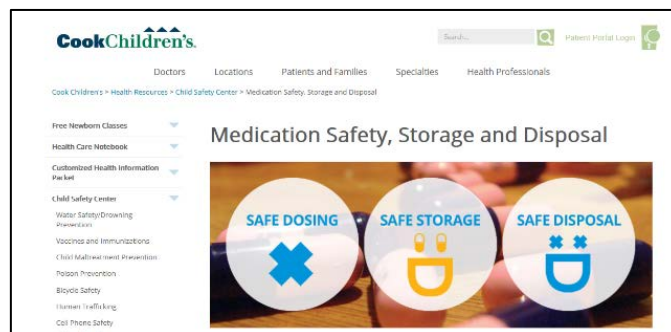
## 3. How to give the medicine.

- Use an accurate medicine measuring spoon or cup.
- When using patches, always remove an old pain patch before putting on a new one.
- Never cut, chew, crush, or dissolve long acting opioid tablets, capsules, or patches.



## 4. Safety and Storage.

- Do not share opioid medicines.
- Store in a dry and cool place.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking opioids.
- Do not use street drugs.
- Check with your doctor before taking other pain medicines.
- Keep opioids in the original box or bottle.
- Do not drive or use heavy machinery until your doctor tells you it is OK.
- Store in a place that is out of reach and sight of children and pets.
- To protect your children, the safest way to store opioids is in a locked box.



This is a good resource on medicine safety.  
[www.meddropbox.org](http://www.meddropbox.org)

## Possible *serious* side effects of Opioids

### Call your doctor if your child:

- Has slurred speech
- Stumbles when walking
- Feels dizzy
- Seems confused
- Is very sleepy and is hard to arouse

### **CALL 911 IF YOUR CHILD:**

- Has trouble breathing.
- Is in a deep sleep and cannot stay awake.
- Cannot talk or walk normally.

### Other Side Effects of Opioids:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Constipation
- Depression
- Itching
- Dry mouth
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Sleepiness

### 3 Very Important Risks to remember when taking Opioids:

1. **Tolerance:** This means you need to take more of the pain medicine for the same pain relief.
2. **Physical Dependence:** This is when you feel symptoms of withdrawal when a pain medicine is stopped.
3. **Addiction:** This happens when you need, and even “crave”, the pain medicine just to feel good.

## Disposal of Opioids

Opioids can be very dangerous if children or pets eat them. They also make tempting targets for theft.

### 1. Many communities have medicine take-back programs. You can:

- Ask your doctor for more information.
- Visit the [U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration’s Office of Diversion Control](#) to learn more.
- Call your local waste management company to ask if there is a take-back program in your community.

### 2. Opioids often come with instructions for flushing unused medicine.

- Check with your pharmacist about how to throw out unused medicines.

### 3. The FDA recommends always flushing used and leftover pain patches down the toilet.

- Even used patches still have enough medicine in them to be dangerous or deadly to pets, children, and others with a low tolerance for opioids.
- To dispose of a pain patch, fold it in half so the sticky sides stick together, then flush it immediately and wash your hands.
- DO NOT throw patches into a trash can.

### 4. Search for a drug disposal location near you visit the DEA diversion website at:

<https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s1>