

BACK PAIN & MEDICATION

CHRONIC BACK PAIN and Tips for Managing Medication



The goal in chronic non-cancer pain management is to improve function, reduce pain, and enhance quality of life. Drug therapy may be helpful in achieving this goal for some people.

Medications are not meant to be stand-alone therapy to manage chronic pain. Significant pain relief from medication is defined as a 30% reduction in pain intensity - not zero pain! It is important to engage in other pain-relieving strategies!

KEY POINTS About Medications

-  There is no magic pill to cure pain.
-  When treating chronic pain, the choice of medication depends on the cause of the pain and the type of pain.
-  Clinicians also factor in your medical history and your other medications
-  It is important to try out a medication for a sufficient amount of time.
-  To reduce side effects- we often start low and go slow in terms of increasing the dosage.
-  Sometimes, it takes a few tries to figure out the best medication(s) and dosage.

HARMS REDUCTION

Everyone responds to medication differently. We aim to find a pain medication that provides more benefit than harm.

We must always balance the benefit obtained from a medication with the associated risks and make sure that harms do not outweigh benefit.

It is important to know what to expect in terms of medication side effects.

It is important to understand what pain medication to take, when to take it and why medications should be taken as prescribed.

CHRONIC PAIN and Opioids

Although opioids can be effective in managing moderate to severe acute pain (e.g., pain following surgery or an injury), there is ***no strong evidence or good quality studies demonstrating opioids are better than other medications or non-drug therapies when used on a long-term basis for chronic non-cancer pain management, including low-back pain.***

If you take opioids, you can obtain a **naloxone kit** as part of an opioid overdose prevention strategy **FREE** of charge from your community pharmacist.

Safe storage and disposal of medications is critical to not only your safety, but also that of any other individuals (including teenagers and children) or pets living in the home.

Studies have shown that many patients receiving long term opioid therapy experience worse overall body pain, function, and mood than patients with similar pain conditions who are not taking opioids.

DID YOU KNOW?



Your local pharmacist knows a lot about medications; you can go to them anytime to discuss a medication's effectiveness, side effects, to learn more about drug therapy or to address any medication specific questions you may have.



Due to our biology and genetics, everyone responds to medication differently. What works for someone else might not work in the same way for you.

LEARN MORE About Managing Medications

Low Back Pain – www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOjTegn9RuY

Pharmacy in Canada – www.pharmacists.ca/pharmacy-in-canada

Opioid Pain Medicines, Information for Patients and Families - www.ismp-canada.org/download/OpioidStewardship/opioid-handout-bw.pdf

Opioids - www.rxfiles.ca/rxfiles/uploads/documents/Patient%20Opioid%20Booklet-Taper-BW.pdf

For more information about safe medication use, visit:

www.ismp-canada.org

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Network