

# Our emergency department has changed the way we prescribe opioids.



If you came to the emergency department today for help with your pain, we are happy to help!

We might suggest that you take medicine that is either an opioid or a non-opioid. **Non-opioids** are medicines like aspirin or Tylenol®. Most non-opioids do not need a prescription.

**Opioids** are strong pain medicines that require a prescription and are taken for a very short time. Opioids work well to reduce certain types of pain. We want to keep you safe if you take them. There are risks of taking opioids that can lead to drug addiction, drug overdose and possibly death.

## What do you need to know?

If you take too many opioids or for too long, you might misuse or even abuse them. To avoid this, we will talk about the following questions that patients usually have.

1

How will we decide if you need an opioid or not?

- ▶ First, we will try to learn how bad your pain is. If we know your level of pain, we can use what we know about pain management to pick the best way to help.
- ▶ Some pain (such as a tooth ache) is often best helped through non-opioid medicine.

2

What if you've had the pain for more than one day?

- ▶ We may contact your other health care provider(s) to decide the best way to help.

3

How long will we tell you to take the opioid?

- ▶ If we prescribe you an opioid, you will take it for a short time. Usually, three days or less. A doctor will decide how long you take the opioid.
- ▶ You might have pain when the opioid runs out. If you do, please tell your primary care provider or doctor. If you don't have a doctor, we would be glad to help you find one that is right for you!

4

How will you know how to take the opioid correctly?

- ▶ We can show you how to take your medicine the right way at the right time. Plus, we will show you how to store it and how to get rid of it when it is no longer needed.

**Please note that we will not write a prescription for an opioid that you may have lost or that was destroyed.**