



Wauwatosa
HEALTH DEPARTMENT



MEDICATION
SAFETY FOR
OLDER
ADULTS

A GUIDE TO SAFELY MANAGING YOUR
OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS



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WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

- Medications that reduce the perception of pain.
- Generally used for: acute and chronic pain, active-phase cancer treatment, palliative care, hospice and end-of-life care.
- Can be an essential part of a comprehensive pain care plan.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

- Constipation
- Dry Mouth
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Impaired cognition
- Tolerance
- Physical dependence
- Depression
- Increased sensitivity to pain

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Older adults tend to use multiple medications which can interact with opioids and cause serious side effects.
- Age-related changes in physiology impact the metabolism of opioids.
- They are highly addictive.
- Older adults use opioids at higher rates and over the long-term some of them have acquired opioid use disorder.

While older adults are not the age group most affected by the opioid crisis, the population of older adults who misuse opioids is projected to double from 2004-2020.

WHAT CAN I DO?

TIPS TO MINIMIZE MISUSE

Consider non-opioid pain management

- Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Exercise therapy, including physical therapy
- Exercise and weight loss
- Other therapies such as acupuncture or massage

Expectations of pain management

- Set pain management goals and develop a treatment plan
- Assess the risks and benefits of prescription opioids
- Follow up if pain is not resolving as quickly as expected
- Discuss all options with your healthcare team

Opioid Basics

Prescription Opioids go by many names including:

Oxycodone
Hydrocodone
Morphine
Codeine
Fentanyl
Carfentanil



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL THE WAUWATOSA HEALTH
DEPARTMENT AT (414) 479-8936**

WWW.WAUWATOSA.NET/SUBSTANCEUSE