GULF COAST VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
PATIENT EDUCATION | PAIN MED SAFETY
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SAFETY INFORMATION FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT
VA IS COMMITTED TO TREATING PAIN IN A WAY THAT ENSURES VETERAN SATISFACTION, YOUR SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF OTHER PEOPLE.

YOUR SAFETY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY:
• Our goal is to prevent overdose, side effects or death from your pain medicines.
• There are many ways to treat chronic pain. Your health care team can help.
• Many Veterans have more success by taking a whole person approach.
• The main goal is to help you manage your pain safely.
• Changes in the treatment of pain are being made at all VA medical centers.

TYPES OF OPIOID MEDICINES:
You may expect changes in your pain program if you take any of these opioid medicines:
• Lortab/Norco
• Morphine
• Fentanyl
• Percocet
• Oxycodone
• Methadone

CHANGES THAT MAY OCCUR:
Your health care team will talk to you about your current treatment plan. Some changes may be made to manage your chronic pain in a safer and more effective way.

You may be offered other pain treatments. These might include:
• Physical therapy
• Occupational therapy
• Heat and cold therapy
• Chiropractic
• Self-care techniques
• Exercise
• Weight loss
• Massage
• Tai Chi
• Acupuncture
• Nerve stimulation
• Relaxation training
• Mental health treatment
• Stretching
• Counseling and coaching
• Rehabilitation
• Non-opioid pain medications
• Injections
• Specialist pain care
• Surgery
• Pain classes
• Support groups
• Yoga

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VA WANTS TO HELP YOU STAY SAFE WHEN USING OPIOIDS.

VA WILL:

- Check your pain diagnosis.
- Try non-opioid treatment for pain first. Physical therapy, other types of pain medicine or other options will be offered.
- Work with you to make a pain plan which includes risks and benefits.
- Have you sign an Opioid Agreement Contract.
- Obtain regular urine tests.
- Provide a short-term trial of medicine.
- Limit the number of pills (when needed)
- Help you make an Exit Plan (what you can do when the treatment plan is not working).
- Review your medicine risks and benefits.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- Learn more about managing your pain. Know and review the things VA is doing for opioid safety.
- If you have chronic pain and use opioids, talk to your provider about the risks and benefits of your current pain therapy. Help your provider deliver safe and effective care.
- Know your medicine or dose may change if your provider finds the opioid you are taking has a high safety risk for you.
- Be open and try other treatment options, (other than opioids) that will help manage your pain.
- Visit the Veterans Health Library online at: [http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/diseasesconditions/ChronicPain/](http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/diseasesconditions/ChronicPain/)

Your provider will work with you to find the best possible ways to manage your pain.