

Managing Pain: What You Should Know About Your Treatment Options

Pain can impact almost every aspect of your life, leading to limited physical functioning, poor mental health, and reduced quality of life. No matter the cause of your pain, you should receive access to safe and effective pain management options and good communication with your doctor to make informed decisions about what is right for you.¹

When dealing with mild to moderate pain, many people turn to over-the-counter medications. When the level of pain requires stronger therapy, opioid medications may be prescribed. Examples of some commonly prescribed opioids include oxycodone (Oxycontin), hydrocodone with acetaminophen (Vicodin), morphine, methadone, tramadol and fentanyl. Prescription opioids carry serious risks of addiction and overdose. Opioids can slow a person's breathing, often a sign associated with someone experiencing an opioid overdose that can cause death.² In addition to the serious risks of addiction, abuse, and overdose, the use of prescription opioids can have a number of side effects, even when taken as directed³:

- Tolerance—meaning you might need to take more of the medication for the same pain relief
- Physical dependence—meaning you have symptoms of withdrawal when the medication is stopped
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression
- Low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy, and strength
- Itching and sweating

If you are prescribed an opioid medication, it is important to discuss the side effects and safety concerns with your doctor as a continued part of your pain management plan.

Alternatives to Opioid Medications

Care N' Care offers coverage of many alternatives to opioid medications for managing pain. You can check with your doctor to see if any of these options are right for you. Having detailed

discussions with your doctor about your pain management and function goals can help your doctor identify the best treatment with the lowest level of risk.⁴ Some examples include:

- Over-The-Counter (OTC) pain medications, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) that are available through our OTC Catalog
- Coverage of many prescription pain medications that are not opioids
- Exercises including strength training, yoga, and walking at one of our SilverSneakers® participating fitness facilities. SilverSneakers® is a benefit offered to you at no extra cost.
- Physical Therapy
- Interventional therapies including steroid injections
- Acupuncture

To review benefit coverage for these examples, see the Evidence of Coverage posted on our website at: cnhealthplan.com/our-plans-2023/plan-documents-2023/ or call your Customer Experience Team at 1-877-374-7993, October 1st to March 31st, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. CST, 7 days a week or April 1st to September 30th, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. CST Monday through Friday. TTY/TDD users should call 711.

Free Resources

If you or a loved one may have a substance abuse disorder, you can access free information from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. You may access the SAMHSA website at samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline or call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) TTY users call 1-800-487-4889. In addition to these services, Care N' Care covers opioid treatment programs. To get more information on these programs, please call your Customer Experience Team at the number listed above.

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/patients/index.html>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/patients/therapy-expectations.html>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/rxawareness/information/index.html>
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/featured-topics/pain-management.html>