

MoreCare Drug Management Program and Opioid Safety

Frequently Asked Questions

MoreCare has a Drug Management Program (DMP) to help you safely use opioid medications. Opioids are a class of drugs that include pain relievers available by prescription only, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, morphine, and many others. Opioid pain medications can help with certain types of pain, but have serious risks like addiction, overdose, and death.

How do I safely take opioid medications?

- Always follow your doctor's directions and never share your medications with others.
- Don't take your medication more often than prescribed. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before you take any extra doses.
- Stay away from dangerous drug interactions. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about all the drugs you take. Mixing opioids with any of the following can greatly add to the risk of overdose:
 - alcohol
 - sleeping pills (such as zolpidem [Ambien®] or zaleplon [Sonata®])
 - anxiety drugs (such as diazepam [Valium®], alprazolam [Xanax®], lorazepam [Ativan®] and others similar)
 - muscle relaxants (such as cyclobenzaprine [Flexeral®], carisoprodol [Soma®] and others similar)
- If your pain is under control, ask your doctor if you should take them less often or change to other pain relief options.
- Keep your opioid medications in their original package and with the original labels. Store them in a place that is out of reach of children and can't be easily accessed by others (locked cabinet). Dispose of them appropriately.
- For safety reasons, unused medications should be disposed of as soon as possible. Talk to your pharmacist for safe drug disposal options in your area.

These risks are increased when opioids are obtained from multiple doctors or pharmacies, and when opioids are taken with certain other medications like benzodiazepines (commonly used for anxiety and sleep). If a member uses opioid medications that they get from several doctors or pharmacies, we may talk to their doctors to make sure their use is appropriate and medically necessary. Working with the doctors, we decide the member is at risk for misusing or abusing opioid or benzodiazepine medications, and limit how they can get those medications. The limitations may be:

- Requiring the member to get all their prescriptions for opioid or benzodiazepine medications from one pharmacy
- Requiring the member to get all their prescriptions for opioid or benzodiazepine medications from one doctor
- Limiting the amount of opioid or benzodiazepine medications we will cover for the member

If we decide that one or more of these limitations should apply to a member, we will send them a letter in advance. The letter will have information explaining the terms of the limitations we think should apply. The member will have an opportunity to tell us which doctors or pharmacies they prefer to use. If the member thinks we made a mistake or disagrees with our determination that they are at-risk for prescription drug abuse or the limitation, the member and their prescriber have the right to ask us for an appeal. Refer to the plan's Evidence of Coverage booklet for information about how to ask for an appeal.

The DMP may not apply to members that have certain medical conditions, such as cancer, receiving hospice, palliative, or end-of-life care, or live in a long-term care facility.

What alternative pain management options should I consider?

Talk to your doctor about ways to manage your pain that do not involve prescription opioids. Some of these options may work better and have fewer risks and side effects. Depending on the type of pain you are experiencing, options may include:

- Over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen (Motrin®), acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or naproxen (Aleve®).
- Prescription-strength anti-inflammatory medications such as celecoxib (Celebrex®), diclofenac (Voltaren®) and etodolac (Lodine®).
- Some prescription non-opioid medications that target pain-producing nerves, such as gabapentin (Neurontin®) and pregabalin (Lyrica®).
- Injectable and topical therapies.
- Chiropractor services, physical and other therapies, heat or cold compresses, exercise, acupuncture, and cognitive behavioral therapy.

Your doctor may recommend treatment options that Medicare, or your plan doesn't cover. If this happens, contact your plan and/or reference the CMS web page for coverage under Medicare Part A and B to understand your coverage options.

(<https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/pain-management>)

What is naloxone and is it safe to use?

Opioids can sometimes slow or even stop your breathing. This can happen if your body can't handle the number of opioids that you take that day. Naloxone is a medication that can undo the effect of opioids in your body. Naloxone is safe and can save your life. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to see if it should be prescribed to you and how to use it correctly. In some states, naloxone can be purchased in the pharmacy without a prescription from a physician.

Are Opioid Therapy Support, Mental Health and Counseling Services covered by the MoreCare Health Plan?

Yes, your Medicare plan covers Opioid Therapy Support, Mental Health and Counseling Services by a healthcare professional.

Please see your plan documents for more details or call our customer service at Toll Free: 844-480-8528 (TTY 711). We're available 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CST, Monday – Friday from April 1 - September 30. (7 days a week from October 1 - March 31). Or visit mymorecare.com anytime.

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