

Delta Dental of Massachusetts

Prescription opioids can be used to help relieve moderate to severe pain and are often prescribed following surgery. It is important to work with your dentist to make sure you are getting the safest, most effective care.

What to Ask Your Doctor Before Taking Opioids: A Checklist

- Why do I need this medication – is it right for me?
- How long should I take this medication?
- Are there non-opioid alternatives that could help with pain while I recover?
- What are the potential side effects from this medication?
- What if my family or I have a history of addiction with tobacco, alcohol or drugs?
- Could this treatment interact with my other medicine for anxiety or sleeping problems?
- Can I share this medication with someone else? Why not?
- How should I store my opioid medication to prevent other people from taking it?
- What should I do with unused opioid medicine?

Safeguard Principles While Taking an Opioid

1. Never take an opioid pain medication that is not prescribed to you.
2. Never take opioids in greater amounts or more than prescribed.
3. Never mix with alcohol.
4. Taking sleep aid or anti-anxiety medications together with opioid pain medication can be dangerous.
5. Always tell your healthcare provider about all medications you are taking.
6. Never sell or share your medication.

Safe Storage of Opioid Medication

-  **DO** secure your prescriptions in the same way you would other valuables.
-  **DO** keep medicine in a cool, dry place that is out of the reach of children.
-  **DO** store medicine in its original container – the label on the bottle provides important information about the medicine.
-  **DO** monitor how many pills are in each of your prescription bottles.
-  **DON'T** leave medicine in places that are easily accessible to children or pets.
-  **DON'T** take medicine in front of children who often mimic adults.

Safe Disposal

Discard Expired and Unused Medications Properly

- Check for medication “take-back” programs with your local police, fire-department or DEA-authorized collection site such as a pharmacy.
- Unless otherwise instructed, do not flush medications down the toilet. Instead mix them with coffee grounds or kitty litter and discard in an empty bag in your household trash; scratch out all personal information on prescription labels from the empty pill bottles before discarding them.