

Narcotic Prescriptions for Orthopaedic Patients

The use of narcotic pain medications in orthopaedics (Percocet, Vicodin , Oxycontin, Dilaudid, Fentanyl, and Codeine) is for the management of acute , not chronic pain. The period of time after an injury or surgery that narcotic medications are useful and appropriate is usually short (1-2 weeks). Chronic pain and end of life pain management that require narcotics long term are not managed by orthopaedic surgeons.

Narcotics are habit forming and addicting. The longer they are used, the more chance there is of becoming addicted.

Unused medication stored in a medicine cabinet and or left out at home can be diverted for recreational use and lead to addiction in those who experiment with these drugs. The police stations in Leominster and Fitchburg have kiosks where unused narcotics can be disposed. Many pharmacies will accept them for proper disposal. Do not put in the trash or flush down the toilet, since the chemicals become part of the ground water and are not destroyed by waste water treatment.

Our government has stated that 80% of current addicts got started by using pharmaceutical narcotics. Governor Charles Baker and our state legislator, Jennifer Flanagan, have tried to address this problem in part by asking prescribers (doctors, PAs, & NPs) for help.

Providers in this office will treat acute pain appropriately and prescribe only enough narcotic medication to cover the acute post injury or post op period.

Narcotic prescriptions cannot be renewed, by law.

Any request for an additional prescription, beyond what was provided acutely, will be reviewed by a provider and the decision to rewrite or not will be made based on individual cases.

Any request for an additional prescription must be made during normal business hours and the written prescription must be picked up by the patient or a family member here at the office.