

SUMMARY OF ARIZONA OPIOID PRESCRIBING GUIDELINES FOR THE TREATMENT OF ACUTE PAIN

The goal of these guidelines is to balance the appropriate treatment of pain with approaches to more safely prescribe opioids. Thoughtful opioid prescribing for acute and post-operative pain can improve safety, reduce harm, and prevent the unintended or inappropriate long-term use of opioid medications.

Note: These guidelines are not intended to apply to hospice or palliative care patients (as defined by the World Health Organization), patients at end of life, or cancer-related pain.

- #1:** Opioid medications should only be used for treatment of acute pain when the severity of the pain warrants that choice, and non-opioid pain medications or therapies will not provide adequate pain relief.
- #2:** When opioid medications are prescribed for treatment of acute pain, the number dispensed should be no more than the number of doses needed. This should be based on the expected duration of pain severe enough to justify prescribing opioids for that condition.
- #3:** When opioid medications are prescribed for acute pain, the patient should be counseled on the following:
 - Sharing with others is illegal.
 - Medications should be stored securely.
 - Medications should be disposed of properly when the pain has resolved to prevent non-medical use of medications.
 - Opioids are intended for short-term use only.
 - Driving or operating machinery should be avoided if a patient is sedated or confused while using opioids.
- #4:** Long acting opioids should not be used for treatment of acute pain, including post-operative pain, except in select opioid tolerate patients and situations where monitoring and assessment for adverse effects can be conducted.
- #5:** The continued use of opioids should be considered carefully, including assessing the potential for misuse. If pain persists beyond the anticipated treatment duration, then the patient should be carefully reevaluated.
- #6:** The Arizona Controlled Substances Prescription Drug Monitoring Program should be checked prior to prescribing opioids and periodically if renewing opioid prescriptions.

For more information on the Arizona Opioid Prescribing Guidelines, visit <http://azdhs.gov/clinicians/clinical-guidelines-recommendations/>