Safety Tips

OPIOID USE AND DENTAL CARE

Your health care provider may give you prescription opioids to help with tooth pain. Opioids are a type of pain medicine. They work by blocking pain signals on nerves and in your brain. This type of pain medication can be very addictive. Most tooth pain will get better after the dentist fixes the tooth problem. Over the counter medicines such as ibuprofen (Advil) and acetaminophen (Tylenol) are best to help with tooth pain. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about which would be best for you.

Before giving you an opioid pain medicine, your dental provider should:

- Ask about medicines you are taking.
- Ask if you have a history of misusing alcohol or other drugs.
- Ask if your parents or grandparents misused alcohol or other drugs.
- Ask if you have any traumatic childhood or adult events.
- Ask if you have any trouble keeping a stable job.
- Talk to you about your pain level and options to treat your dental pain.
- Tell you about risks of taking opioids, including if you have sleep apnea, are pregnant, consume alcohol or take other medications such as Xanax, Valium, Ativan or Klonopin.
- Tell you the amount of pain medicine to take each day and for how many days.
- Call you in 2-3 days to ask if the tooth pain is getting better.

What to do with unused opioid pain medicine?

Often patients feel better before the pain medicine is used up. **Do not save unused pain medicine.** Someone else might find and use the extra medicine. A medical office, a pharmacy or local police station can help you get rid of unused pain medicine.

Who is at higher risk of an opioid overdose?

- People who take more opioid medicine than told or have an opioid use disorder.
- People who drink alcohol or take other medicines with opioids.
- People who have attempted suicide or have serious mental health conditions.
- Anyone who has already experienced an opioid overdose.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/about/prescription-opioids.html

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