

Safe Pain Management

If you're one of millions of Americans with long-term pain, also called chronic pain, you know how debilitating and frustrating it can be. It can be harmful to your health and well-being. It can keep you from getting a good night's sleep, eating right, and exercising. It can affect your mood and work, and can keep you from spending time with your friends and family.

Every year, millions of prescriptions are written for pain medications — many of them are opioids that can lead to addiction. But there are many other treatments available for pain instead of opioids that may work better and have fewer associated risks.

The Dangers of Taking Prescription Opioids Recreationally

It's dangerous to take prescription pain medications recreationally or for reasons other than managing pain as directed.

It can lead to addiction and unintentional overdose. Taking opioids with alcohol or sedatives increases the risk of overdose. Misuse of prescription opioids is also a risk factor for transitioning to heroin use.



If you or someone you know has a substance use disorder, also known as addiction, we can help.

Call anytime, toll-free.



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Talk to your doctor about trying these non-opioid alternatives for pain relief.

Non-Opioid Medication Options

	Medication	Examples	Indications
Over-the-Counter (OTC)	Acetaminophen	Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)	Osteoarthritis, chronic lower back pain, migraine
	Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs	Ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve®), Celecoxib (Celebrex®)	Acute and chronic low back pain, osteoarthritis
	Topical Agents	Capsaicin	Neuropathic pain, osteoarthritis, musculoskeletal pain
Requires a Prescription	Tricyclic Anti-Depressants	Amitriptyline (Elavil®, Endep®), Nortriptyline (Pamelor®)	Diabetic neuropathy, post-herpetic neuralgia, fibromyalgia, migraine
	Anticonvulsants	Pregabalin, Gabapentin, Carbamazepine	Diabetic neuropathy, postherpetic neuralgia, fibromyalgia
	Topical Agents	Lidocaine, Topical Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs	Neuropathic pain, osteoarthritis, musculoskeletal pain
Interventional Approaches	Epidural or Joint Injections	Glucocorticoid injections	Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis, rotator cuff disease



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Non-Pharmacological Treatment Options

Treatment	Indications
Physical/Exercise Therapy	Lower back pain, fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	Chronic pain, disability, mood
Acupuncture	Chronic pain, fibromyalgia
Therapeutic massage	Chronic pain, fibromyalgia

Each of these treatment options may have risks. Talk to your doctor about what the potential risks could be.

For more information on safe opioid prescribing, review [Safe Med LA's Safe Opioid Prescribing Recommendations](#) (endorsed by the California Society of Addiction Medicine).

SOURCES

National Institute on Drug Abuse: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/misuse-prescription-drugs/what-classes-prescription-drugs-are-commonly-misused>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/training/nonopioid/508c/index.html>

Choosing Wisely: <http://www.choosingwisely.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Medicines-To-Relieve-Chronic-Pain-ASA.pdf>

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