



Rx Pain Medications

KNOW THE OPTIONS • GET THE FACTS

Dangerous Drug Interactions

Please consult your health care provider before using prescription pain medications with other substances.

Did you know...

According to the CDC, about one-half of deaths from prescription pain medications involve the use of at least one other drug.¹



Mixing opioids with other substances can cause dangerous side effects, including breathing trouble, coma, and even permanent brain damage or death.^{2,3}

If you are taking prescription pain medications, do NOT take the following without first talking to your health care provider:

- **Alcohol** (including beer, wine, and liquor)
- **Antihistamines** (including allergy medications such as Benadryl®)
- **Cough medicine/cough syrup**
- **Barbiturates and benzodiazepines** (often used as sleeping pills and sedatives, such as Ambien®, Xanax®, and Valium®)
- **General anesthetics** (often used for surgery)



To find more information on safer, more effective pain management in the CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Call 9-1-1 or the National Poison Help number at 1-800-222-1222.



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Drugs most frequently involved in drug overdose deaths: United States, 2010–2014. *National Vital Statistics Report* 65(10).

² National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2016). Misuse of prescription drugs: Is it safe to use opioid drugs with other medications? Retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/prescription-drugs/opioids/it-safe-to-use-opioid-drugs-other-medications>

³ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2017). Drug facts: Prescription pain medications (Opioids). *NIDA for Teens*. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/prescription-pain-medications-opioids>



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What to Do if Your Medication Isn't Working

If you're in pain and your medication isn't working well enough, it can be tempting to stop or increase the dosage. However, trying to manage pain on your own without talking to your health care provider can have serious consequences, including unpleasant or dangerous side effects—or even death.

If your pain medication isn't working, call your health care provider.

Remember:

- Don't change the dosage without talking to your health care provider.
- Don't abruptly stop taking your medication.
- Take medicines only as directed.

When you talk to your health care provider:

- Tell them about all the medicines you take, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and any vitamins, supplements, or herbal medications.
- Describe what has happened since your last visit.
- Verify that you were prescribed the right medication.
- Ask what the medication is supposed to do and when it will start working.
- Write down any information the health care provider gives you about making a change in your treatment.
- Ask questions if the health care provider's instructions are unclear.
- Ask about nonpharmacologic treatment options.

A good patient-provider relationship is a partnership. You and your health care providers can work as a team to address your problems with pain and keep you healthy. And, as always, do not share with others—prescription medications should always be monitored by a licensed prescriber or health care provider.

Additional Resources

For more information on pain management, visit: www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/pain-management or <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/patients.html>.

Sources Consulted

- National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2014). Preventing and recognizing prescription drug abuse. Retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/prescription-drugs-abuse-addiction/preventing-recognizing-prescription-drug-abuse>





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Managing Your Pain: Which Approach Is Right for You?

Although prescription pain medications can be effective at treating certain types of pain, there are different treatment options and therapies available. Whether one approach is safer and more effective than another will depend on your unique situation.

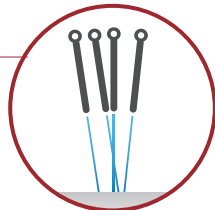
Do not use this information to diagnose or treat any medical condition. Use this information to help you discuss your pain management options with your provider so that together you can identify the most effective approach to your care. This list is not exhaustive.

To minimize the risk of negative effects and ensure the best possible treatment of your pain:

- Learn as much as possible about the therapy you are considering.
- Discuss all treatments, including complementary and nonpharmacologic practices, with your doctor before beginning or changing a treatment approach.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a practice that involves the stimulation of specific points on the body, usually through the insertion of thin needles into the skin.¹



<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/acupuncture/introduction>

Chiropractic

Chiropractic care typically involves manipulation or adjustment of the spine and other parts of the body by a chiropractor or osteopath.^{2,3}



Chiropractors are health care professionals who are licensed by the state in which they practice.⁶

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/spinalmanipulation>

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/chiropractic/introduction.htm>

Cognitive behavioral therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy is a form of psychotherapy that focuses on helping patients change their thinking patterns in order to change unhealthy behavior or moods.⁴ Sessions involve structured meetings with a trained mental health counselor or psychologist for a limited amount of time.⁴ Cognitive behavioral therapy often involves relaxation exercises, journal writing, and certain stress and pain relief methods.



<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies/index.shtml>

Massage therapy

Massage therapy may have many different forms, but typically massage therapy involves the manipulation of soft tissue for health-related issues.³



<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/massage/massageintroduction.htm>

continued... >>>

Meditation and relaxation

Relaxation techniques are practices used to provoke the natural relaxation response of the body—slowing breathing, reducing heart rate and blood pressure, and producing a feeling of calm.³ Some common forms of relaxation practices include guided imagery, deep breathing, biofeedback, self-hypnosis, and progressive relaxation.⁶



<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm>

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/stress/relaxation.htm>

Physical therapy

Physical therapy is a rehabilitative process that may include a number of different physical techniques, including heat and cold, exercise, massage, and electrical stimulation to improve functioning and manage pain.^{5,6} Practitioners of physical therapy are health care professionals who are licensed by the state in which they practice.⁶



<http://www.moveforwardpt.com/Default.aspx>

Yoga

Yoga is a mind and body practice that combines breathing techniques, physical postures, and meditation or relaxation.³ Many different styles of yoga exist, varying in focus and intensity of physical movement.



<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/yoga/introduction.htm>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Find more information on safer, more effective pain management in the CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain.

<http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>

Find more information on complementary and nonpharmacologic approaches to pain management.

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/pain/ebook>

Find more information on helpful tips on how to locate and evaluate online resources for complementary and nonpharmacologic approaches.

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/webresources>

Find more information on licensing and credentialing of complementary health practitioners.

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/decisions/credentialing.htm>

NEED HELP?

Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for 24-hour free and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, and recovery in English and Spanish.

www.samhsa.gov/find-help

¹ National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. (2016). Pain: Considering complementary approaches. Retrieved from <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/pain/ebook>

² National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. (2016). Chiropractic: An introduction. Retrieved from https://nccih.nih.gov/sites/nccam.nih.gov/files/D403_06-07-2012.pdf

³ National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. (2016). Get the facts: Yoga for health. Retrieved from [https://nccih.nih.gov/sites/nccam.nih.gov/files/Get_The_Facts_Yoga_for_Health_06-04-2013_2\).pdf](https://nccih.nih.gov/sites/nccam.nih.gov/files/Get_The_Facts_Yoga_for_Health_06-04-2013_2).pdf)

⁴ National Institute of Mental Health. (2016). Psychotherapies. Retrieved from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies/index.shtml>

⁵ National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. (2014). Pain: Hope through research. Retrieved from <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Hope-Through-Research/Pain-Hope-Through-Research>

⁶ American Physical Therapy Association. (2017). Choosing your physical therapist: How to choose a physical therapist. Retrieved from http://www.moveforwardpt.com/Resources/Choose.aspx#VPSfD_nF-3c

