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Pain medications are associated with risks of overdose and addiction.



We can refer you to a drug treatment program. For more information, you can call the Help Line 2-1-1 or visit the website [www.211md.org](http://www.211md.org).

Safe storage information:  
[www.fda.gov/lockitup](http://www.fda.gov/lockitup)



DHMH SEAL

ENA LOGO

MEDCHI LOGO

MHA LOGO



**Maryland Emergency Department and Acute Care Facility Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids**

# Opioid Prescribing Guidelines

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Our emergency department staff understand that pain relief is important when someone is hurt or needs emergency care. However, providing pain relief is often complex. Mistakes or misuse of pain medication can cause serious health problems and are a major cause of accidental death. We strive to provide pain relief options that are safe and appropriate.

Our main job is to look for and treat an emergency medical condition. Chronic pain is best managed and coordinated outside the emergency department by primary care providers or a pain specialist.

We use our best judgment when treating pain, and follow legal and ethical guidelines.

For your safety, we will do the following.



- We will recommend that one doctor and one pharmacy provide all the medications used to treat a patient's chronic pain.
- We will often use computers to track patient visits and prescriptions.

- We will not provide missed doses of methadone or buprenorphine for patients in drug treatment programs, except in particular situations.

## ACUTE PAIN

We will start with the safest medication.

We will start with the safest effective dose if pain medications are used.

We will prescribe no more than a short course of pain medications. Generally, most patients require no more than 3 days.

We will avoid prescribing multiple medications at the same time.

We may ask you about drug abuse before prescribing medications.

## CHRONIC PAIN

We may call your primary care doctor or your pharmacy or follow the agreement between you and your primary care doctor.

We will provide referral to a primary care doctor, if needed.

We will not typically give out prescriptions for pain medications that were lost, stolen or destroyed.

We will not typically prescribe extended release/long acting pain medications such as methadone, oxycodone, or fentanyl skin patches.