

Supporting Canada’s national efforts for safe opioid use
– a pediatric rehabilitation hospital’s initiative to provide
opioid education

Milicevic T¹, Danial A¹, Rumbolt, S¹, Doig J¹, Rudden L¹, Chaudhary R¹
Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Toronto, Ontario , Canada

Background

- Opioids are commonly used to help manage pain in a rehabilitation setting
- In 2018, Health Canada implemented new regulatory changes to opioid dispensing, including mandatory warning stickers & patient handouts

Description

- The goal of this initiative was to create a patient and family-friendly opioid medication safety guide at a pediatric rehabilitation hospital in Toronto to supplement Health Canada’s regulations

Methods

- This initiative was led by an inter-professional group consisting of clinicians, managers and collaborative practice lead
- The work was inspired by a similar initiative at an acute care referring hospital
- The group created a one-page tip sheet that identifies how best to use opioids safely and effectively

Methods

- Guiding principles aligned with client and family centred care
- Review and input was obtained from families and the hospital’s health literacy team
- The tip sheet is included alongside the Health Canada mandatory handout with each opioid dispensed for weekend passes

Figure 1 Opioid medication safety guide

Results

- Successful client, family, clinician engagement showed the significance of this work
- Internal 72 hour post-discharge phone call results are limited due to small sample sizes and time-frames to show significant trends
- Nursing feedback suggests it is a useful communication tool for patients and families

Conclusions

- Creation of this opioid medication safety guide at a pediatric rehabilitation hospital illustrates a hospital-level initiative to align with the national strategy to provide balanced information around opioids
- Opioid medications are important to pediatric pain management and can be used safely. This initiative reminded us the importance of this clinical conversation.
- The safety guide, alongside Health Canada’s dispensing requirements, help families understand how to use these medications safely and effectively

References

Canada, H., 2020. Opioid Warning Sticker And Patient Information Handout, And Risk Management Plans - Canada.Ca. [online] Canada.ca. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/drug-products/applications-submissions/policies/warning-sticker-opioid-patient-information-handout.html> [Accessed 8 October 2020].

*All authors have nothing to disclose.

Opioid medication safety guide
Important tips for families

Opioids are medications that can be used safely and effectively to manage pain. We want to give you clear information about how to use these important medications.
Examples of opioid medications include morphine, hydromorphone and oxycodone.

Health Canada requires us to put this warning sticker on your opioid medication containers, and give you the "Opioid Medicines - Information for Patients and Families" handout.

Tips for safe use of opioids

- Follow Instructions**
There are risks with changing the timing or dose of medications. Follow the instructions on the medication label and any information from your prescriber.
- Store safely**
Keep your medication in a safe place. It should be out of reach and out of sight of children and pets.
- Watch for side effects**
Ask your healthcare team about things to watch out for while on medications. Common side effects may include: constipation, itchiness, nausea and vomiting, drowsiness. Significant side effects may include: Low blood pressure, shallow breathing, slow breathing.
- Read label carefully**
Only use medications prescribed for you. If your name is not on the bottle, do not use the medication.
- Return unused medications**
Bring back all unused medications to your team at Holland Bloorview for safe disposal. Never share your unused medications with others.
- Talk to your team**
Contact your healthcare team if you have concerns or questions about:
 - your pain
 - your medications
 - trying any new medications (prescribed or over-the-counter)
 - any other concernsLet them know right away!

Do you want to discuss your medications during your stay at Holland Bloorview?
Speak with your:

- Pharmacist
- Doctor
- Nurse
- Nurse Practitioner

Visit AboutKidsHealth.ca for more information about opioids.

Opioid Warning Sticker

Opioids can cause DEPENDENCE, ADDICTION and OVERDOSE.

Opioid Medicines
Information for Patients and Families

You have been prescribed an opioid medicine for the treatment of pain or for another condition. Talk to the health professional who prescribed your opioid, or your pharmacist if you:

- Have questions about your opioid medicine.
- Do not understand the instructions for using the opioid medicine given to you.
- Develop side effects or your condition worsens.

SERIOUS WARNINGS	SIGNS OF OVERDOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opioid overdose can lead to death. Overdose is more likely to happen at higher doses, or if you take opioids with alcohol or with other sedating drugs (such as sleeping pills, anxiety medication, anti-depressants, muscle relaxants).Addiction may occur, even when opioids are used as prescribed.Physical dependence can occur when opioids are used every day. This can make it hard to stop using them.Life-threatening breathing problems or reduced blood pressure may occur with opioid use. Talk to the health professional who prescribed your opioid about whether any health conditions you have may increase your risk.Your pain may worsen with long-term opioid use or at higher doses. You may not feel pain relief with further increases in your dose. Talk to the health professional who prescribed your opioid if this happens to you, as a lower dose or a change in treatment may be required.Withdrawal symptoms, such as widespread pain, irritability, agitation, flu-like symptoms and trouble sleeping, are common when you stop or reduce the use of opioids.Babies born to mothers taking opioids may develop life-threatening withdrawal symptoms.Use only as directed. Crushing, cutting, breaking, chewing or dissolving opioids before consuming them can cause serious harm, including death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">HallucinationsConfusionDifficulty walkingExtreme drowsiness/dizzinessSlow or unusual breathingUnable to be woken upCold and clammy skin <p>Call 911 or your local emergency response provider right away if you suspect an opioid overdose or think you may have taken too much.*</p> <p>* Naloxone has been approved by Health Canada to temporarily reverse known or suspected opioid overdoses.</p>

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduced physical and/or mental abilities, depressionDrowsiness, dizziness, risks of falls/fracturesHeart palpitations, irregular heartbeatProblems sleeping, may cause or worsen sleep apneaVision problems, headacheLow sex drive, erectile dysfunction, infertilitySevere constipation, nausea, vomiting

YOUR OPIOIDS MAY BE FATAL TO OTHERS

- Never give your opioid medicine to anyone.**
- Store opioids (including used patches) in a secure place to prevent theft, problematic use or accidental exposure.
- Keep opioids out of sight and reach of children and pets. Taking even one dose by accident can be fatal.
- Never throw opioids (including used patches) into household trash where children and pets may find them.
- Return expired, unused or used opioids (including patches) to a pharmacy for proper disposal.

This handout is a summary and will not tell you everything about opioid medicines.
More information about the opioid you have been prescribed (or naloxone) can be found online in the Product Monograph: <https://health-products.canada.ca/dpd-bdpp/index-eng.jsp> Date: 2019/03/15