



# THINGS to KNOW

## When Prescribed an Opioid

### What to Do in a Breathing Emergency

- If available, give naloxone as directed.
- Call 911.
- Stay with that person until help arrives.
- If a breathing emergency occurs, do not let the person take more opioids until seen by a doctor.
- Rescue breathing or CPR may be needed prior to emergency services personnel arriving.

### Staying Safe

- Review medications you are taking with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- Do not start new medications without talking to your doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Store medications in a secure place, away from children and pets
- Take your medications exactly as prescribed. Do not take more often or more than prescribed.
- If you have questions, talk with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- Do not share your medication with others.
- Do not drink alcohol while on opioids.

### Prevent Serious Side Effects

- Even when taken as directed, opioids have side effects and risks.
- Opioids can slow or stop breathing. This is a “breathing emergency.” If you feel short of breath, are very sleepy, have low energy, or have trouble breathing, you may need help.
- A medication called naloxone is used as an antidote if a breathing emergency occurs.
- People on higher doses of opioids (equal to 50mg of morphine or more) are at a higher risk of breathing side effects.
- Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you need to keep naloxone on hand in case of an emergency.
- A loved one can learn how to give you naloxone if you need it.

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