



Scan for more information

New Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids

Bulletin Volume 6 | November 2022

Clinical Practice Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Pain

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new clinical practice guidelines for prescribing opioids for pain. The updated guidelines refer to and promote integrated pain management and collaboration among clinicians including pharmacists, registered nurses, behavioral health specialists and social workers. **The opioid dosage recommendations are intended to guide and inform clinician-patient decision making, not act as a rigid standard of care.**



Updated recommendations address the use of opioid pain medication in certain special populations including older adults and conditions posing special risks such as a history of substance use disorder. The guidance outlines recommendations applying to patients that are:

1. Being considered for initial treatment with prescription opioids
2. Already receiving opioids as part of ongoing pain management

Update: Determining Whether, When and How to Taper Opioids

The benefits and risks of opioid therapy change over time and should be reevaluated periodically ([recommendation six](#) and [recommendation seven](#)). The 2022 clinical practice guideline [recommendation five](#) outlines situations when clinicians should consider tapering to a reduced opioid dosage or tapering and discontinuing opioid therapy. These approaches should be discussed with patients prior to initiating changes. Recommendation five also includes revised and expanded guidance on the following topics to support opioid tapering when indicated:

- Determining whether, when and how to taper opioids
- Providing advice to patients prior to tapering
- Management of opioid withdrawal during tapering
- Behavioral health support during tapering
- Tapering rate
- Pain management during tapering
- Challenges to tapering
- Continuing high dosage opioids

Opioid Dosage Guidance Updates

- Suggestions for the lowest starting dose for opioid naïve patients
- Morphine milligram equivalent doses for commonly prescribed opioids
- The approach to potential dosage increases, emphasizing principles of safe and effective pain treatment that allow for individual circumstances and flexibility in care

Complete updated CDC guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/rr/rr7103a1.htm>



Pharmacist's Corner

Free Continuing Education

[WEBINAR](#)

Thursday, November 17

(12:00 p.m. MT)

Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) call on the new CDC guidelines for prescribing opioids for pain.

Helpful Time-Bound Definitions:

- **Acute pain:** duration of less than one month
- **Subacute pain:** duration of one to three months
- **Chronic pain:** duration of greater than three months

Recommendations for initiating therapy for acute, subacute and chronic pain can be found by clicking the photo below.



visit www.mpqhf.org/QIO
for more resources.