

The following is a checklist of information for doctors to share with patients who are going to trial using opioid medications. It is for the patient to keep.

- My doctor will not prescribe opioid painkillers on my first visit. If we agree at a follow-up visit to try opioids, it will only be for a specified period. Our plan for treating my pain will be reassessed regularly.
- Opioid (morphine-like) painkillers would only be prescribed to me for a short-term trial (maximum 90 days) to see if they improve my ability to carry out usual activities of daily living and reduce the intensity of my pain.
- Opioid painkillers may be partially helpful in managing my pain, but often will not help at all.
- Painkillers are only one part of my chronic pain management, and may be ineffective in the long-term. I may be referred to a health professional to identify other active (non-opioid) pain management strategies.
- I need to take my dose as prescribed, and I will discuss any changes in my dose with my doctor in my review appointments.
- I need to keep my medication secure. Lost, misplaced or stolen scripts/medication will not be replaced.
- Providing my opioid medication to other people is illegal and could be dangerous to them.
- I understand these are very powerful medications and are drugs of addiction, so I know that it's important to tell my doctor if I have ever had a problem with drugs or alcohol. Alcohol and some medicines can interact negatively with my opioid painkillers.
- Only my doctor who is giving me this information, and other doctors at this practice, are authorised to prescribe opioid medications to me.
- I understand my doctor is required to gain authorisation from the Department of Health for continued prescription of these medications.
- I am required to tell my doctor if I have ever been involved in illegal activity related to any drugs including prescription medicines.
- Opioid painkillers can be associated with side effects, including sedation, constipation, and a slower rate of breathing. I need to tell my doctor if I experience them.
- My doctor may stop prescribing opioid painkillers if they are not effective in improving my level of activity and/or reducing the intensity of my pain, and may try other strategies.
- My doctor may stop prescribing opioid medicines if s/he is concerned I'm not taking them as directed.

References to support the information in this Opioid Medication Patient Plan

1. Fishman, S.M., Kreis, P.G. (2002). The opioid contract. *The Clinical Journal of Pain*, 18: S70-S75.
2. Cohen, M., Wodak, A. (2012). Opioid prescribing in general practice: a proposed approach. *Medicine Today*, 13: 24-32.