

# CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

## PATIENT INFORMATION

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) ABOUT OPIOIDS

<b>WHEN SHOULD I BEGIN TAKING MY OPIOID PAIN MEDICATION?</b>	<p>Pain medication should be taken for severe pain as needed, but only if pain is not controlled with nonopioid medication (painkillers such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen).</p> <p>If you need opioids for severe pain, take them as prescribed on the medication's bottle.</p>
<b>HOW MANY SHOULD I TAKE AT ANY GIVEN TIME?</b>	<p>To figure out how many pills you should take, read the instructions on the medication's bottle or the instructions given to you by your health care provider.</p>
<b>CAN I TAKE TYLENOL, ASPIRIN, OR ADVIL INSTEAD OF THIS MEDICATION OR WITH THIS MEDICATION?</b>	<p>Probably yes, but you should check with your health care provider.</p> <p>Some prescribed pain medications combine acetaminophen with opioids. Taking additional acetaminophen with the prescribed combination pain medication could be unsafe.</p>
<b>DO I NEED TO FINISH THE ENTIRE BOTTLE OF PILLS?</b>	<p>No, pain medication should be taken when needed and pain medication must be stopped when pain is controlled.</p> <p>If your severe pain is under control, there is no need to finish the bottle.</p>
<b>WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THE PILLS THAT ARE LEFTOVER?</b>	<p>Leftover pills should not be left in your home where someone else can take them.</p> <p>There are facilities that will take these leftover medications. Check with your health care provider.</p>
<b>CAN I GIVE THESE PAIN MEDICATIONS TO FAMILY MEMBERS?</b>	<p>No, medications should never be shared with a family member or anyone else.</p> <p>If you have any pills leftover, check with your health care provider or take them to a facility that will get rid of them safely.</p>

**SOURCE:** Anne SA, Mims JW, Tunkel DE, et al. Clinical practice guideline: opioid prescribing for analgesia after common otolaryngology operations. *Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* 2021;164(2\_suppl):S1-S42.



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#### ABOUT THE AAO-HNS/F

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) represents approximately 12,000 specialists worldwide who treat the ear, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The AAO-HNS Foundation works to advance the art, science, and ethical practice of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery through education, research, and lifelong learning.