

Prescribing Pain Medication in the Emergency Department



We know that pain relief is important when someone is hurt or needs emergency care. However, providing pain relief is often complex. Mistakes or misuse of pain medication can cause serious health problems and even death. We will only provide pain relief options that are safe and appropriate.



- Our job is to look for and treat emergency medical conditions.
- We use our best judgment when treating pain and follow all legal and ethical guidelines.
- We may ask you to show a photo ID when you check into the emergency department or receive a prescription for pain medication.
- We may ask you about a history of pain medication misuse or substance abuse before prescribing any pain medication.
- We may only provide enough pain medication to last until you can contact your doctor.
- We will prescribe pain medication with a lower risk of addiction and overdose when possible.

For your safety, we do not:

- Give pain medication shots for sudden increases in chronic pain.
- Refill stolen or lost prescriptions for medication.
- Prescribe missed methadone doses.
- Prescribe long-acting pain medication such as OxyContin, MS Contin, fentanyl patches, or methadone for chronic, non-cancer pain.
- Prescribe pain medication if you already receive pain medication from another doctor or emergency department. An exception may be made after a urine drug test or contact with your doctor or clinic.

If you would like help, we can refer you to a drug treatment program.
Or you can call the Arkansas Division of Behavioral Health Services at 501-686-9164.

