



The College of
Physicians and Surgeons
of Newfoundland and Labrador

Practice Guideline: Prescribing Opioids for Acute Pain

Practice Guidelines are recommendations developed by the College to which members should be familiar with and follow whenever and wherever possible and appropriate.

Prescribing Opioids for Acute Pain

Preamble

The College expects physicians to prescribe opioid medications in a manner which is safe and effective. Until Canadian guidelines for the treatment of acute pain are released, the College supports the CDC (US Department of Health and Human Services) *Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain (2016)* as it pertains to the use of opioids for acute pain. This guideline can assist physicians in making practice decisions about the safe and effective use of opioids for acute pain management.

Practice Guideline

Physicians should follow the *CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain (2016)* as it pertains to the use of opioids for acute pain management:

Long-term opioid use often begins with treatment of acute pain. When opioids are used for acute pain, clinicians should prescribe the lowest effective dose of immediate-release opioids and should prescribe no greater quantity than needed for the expected duration of pain severe enough to require opioids. Three days or less will often be sufficient; more than seven days will rarely be needed.

Acknowledgements/References

Dowell D., Haegerich TM, Chou R. CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain – United States, 2016. MMWR Recomm Rep 2016;65 (No. RR-1): 1-49.

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