OPIOID SAFETY AND NALOXONE

A Guide for Patients and Caregivers

WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are strong medicines that reduce your pain. These medicines can have serious side effects if used incorrectly. Opioids include illegal drugs like heroin as well as prescriptions. Some commonly used opioids are Tylenol #3, Duragesic, Vicodin or Lortab, MS Contin, OxyContin and Percocet.

RISK FACTORS FOR OVERDOsing

• Mixing opioids with other medicines, illegal drugs or alcohol
• Taking more medicine than the doctor prescribes
• Using opioids for the first time
• Taking opioids over a long time period
• Administering opioids without doctor supervision
• Having a history of chemical addiction

SIGNS OF AN OVERDOSE

• Cold, clammy skin
• Slow, loud breathing or no breathing
• Sleepiness, limpness or coma
• Small or “pinpoint” pupils

Call 911 right away if you think someone has overdosed.

Tell them if the person is not alert or is not breathing. Give a clear address and/or description of your location.

After calling 911, consider administering naloxone. An overdose-related death can be prevented if naloxone is given in a timely manner.

Please turn over for more information
WHAT IS NALOXONE?

Naloxone is a medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration to prevent an opioid overdose. It works by reversing the effects of opioids. When administered during an overdose, naloxone can block the effects of opioids on the brain and restore breathing.

HOW TO GIVE NALOXONE

Make sure you know how to use naloxone in the event of an overdose. Naloxone comes with instructions that you can follow. After giving naloxone, stay with the person until emergency help arrives.

NALOXONE AVAILABILITY

Naloxone comes in two forms: injection (Evzio™) or nasal spray (NARCAN®). Naloxone also comes in a generic, low-cost form; talk to your pharmacist about generic prescriptions. To compare all available products, visit the prescribetoprevent.org website.

ACCESS TO NALOXONE

Patients can obtain naloxone at little or no cost depending on the form of naloxone dispensed. Generic products are low cost. Brand name products such as Evzio™ and NARCAN® have patient assistance programs, which allow the product to be free or low cost regardless of insurance coverage. For more information about these programs, you can visit the following websites:

NARCAN® NASAL SPRAY – www.narcan.com/affordability