

Opioids: Pros and cons

Pro

Short-term use of opioids can relieve pain.

Cons

With prolonged use, opioids become less effective.

Possible side effects: nausea, itching, constipation drowsiness, and restlessness.

Prolonged use might increase sensitivity to pain in the entire body

Opioids are addictive



Do not taper opioids rapidly or stop using them all at once, since you might experience withdrawal symptoms like: anxiety, restlessness, (extreme) urge to move, irritability, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

These symptoms are temporary and will resolve on their own. Reducing the dose slowly can help minimize them.

Tapering

Do you want to stop using painkillers?

1. Start by gradually reducing the doses of strong painkillers such as oxycodone, morphine, fentanyl, and tramadol.
2. Lower your doses of painkillers like diclofenac, naproxen, and ibuprofen.
3. Finally, reduce paracetamol doses gradually until you stop.

Always consult your doctor and/or pharmacist before stopping pain medications. They can help you develop a tapering plan to minimize withdrawal symptoms.

For more information, go to www.thuisarts.nl/pijn-en-painkillers/i-want-to-quit-with-strong-pain-killers (Dutch website), or scan the QR code.



For support and information visit:

- www.opiaten.nl/patienten
- Pijnpatiënten naar één stem
- Stichting Pijn-Hoop
- Patiëntenfederatie Nederland
- www.opiatenafbouwen.nl

Pain acceptance

The brain plays an important role in pain perception. Pain can cause physical as well as mental distress. In addition to medication, talking to a therapist, a psychologist or a mental health family nurse can help with pain management.

Learning techniques for coping with pain and taking good care of yourself can help reduce pain. One example to consider is mindfulness.



What can you do do to relieve pain?

Opioids are effective painkillers for short-term use. However they are not a good long-term solution for pain relief .

In addition to medications, there are other ways to manage pain



Stay active



Stay close to nature



Listen to music



Keep a diary of what you can and cannot do



Make sure you get enough rest at night



Try meditation or mindfulness

Other options to discuss with your doctor or pharmacist



Painkillers like paracetamol, diclofenac, naproxen, and ibuprofen



Physiotherapy, behavioral therapy and mindfulness



Do you want to stop using opioids and participate in scientific research? Ask your doctor for an information letter about the study

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OPIOIDS

Strong painkillers such as :
oxycodone, morphine, fentanyl, tramadol, hydromorphone and methadone

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Tapering

Other options