

Piñon Family Medicine

Narcotic/Opioid policy

It is the goal of Piñon Family Medicine to provide the best care possible for our patients. In order to reach this goal, it is necessary to provide information to keep our patients informed. Although this notice likely addresses only a few of those who read it, we feel it is important to have this policy available to you.

Our office policy on the use and prescription of narcotics is as follows.

We do not prescribe narcotics for chronic pain. However, narcotics may occasionally be prescribed for acute injuries only when the injury/condition is less than one week old. These prescriptions will still be based on the judgement of the provider for appropriateness. If you have previously been on narcotic/opioid medication for a particular condition from an outside provider, we are unable to provide any further narcotic or opioid prescriptions for this condition.

If you are under the supervision of a pain management physician, we expect you to disclose this information to us on your first visit. Failure to do so is fraud, and would violate your contract with your pain management physician.

If you have a surgery from an outside physician, and have been on chronic narcotics from a pain management physician, you will need to continue to receive your post-operative pain medicine from that physician.

As part of keeping our patients informed, we want to make you aware of the reasons why we limit the use of narcotics.

According to medical research, severe post injury pain and postoperative that would require narcotics will usually reduce significantly by 2-3 days after surgery or injury and is gone by 10-14 days. Postoperative or post-injury needs for narcotics longer than this period may signal complications that need more direct or specific treatment instead of covering up the problem.

After 3-7 days your brain wants to and is supposed to kick in and manage the pain naturally. This is the best way to manage medium and long-term soreness and milder pain. Narcotics are known to block this normal process.

Narcotics are proven to be habit forming. Dependency on pain medication can start in as little as 2 weeks after beginning their use. Sadly, abuse of prescription narcotics has exploded into a national epidemic. In fact, accidental death from overdose of prescription narcotics now exceeds that of heroin and cocaine combined. As healthcare providers with the knowledge level of the 21st century, we cannot allow this to happen.

In addition, the Arizona Medical Board and The Drug Enforcement Administration track physicians and their use of narcotics. There are increasingly more restrictions for providers against prescribing narcotics long term. We agree with these policies. Therefore, if you are receiving narcotics from a previous physician, primary care provider, or pain management, you will need to continue your care with that provider.

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We do not deny that you experience and have pain; however, it is necessary to be aware of your own ability to tolerate pain and the available modalities to treat pain. If you come to us with a chronic pain condition, we will explore the available non-narcotic modalities available to create a customized plan for you. In most cases, this will include a referral to pain management, and often includes other referrals such as physical therapy or cognitive behavioral therapy. Your pain management plan may include non-narcotic medications, and sometimes referral to chiropractic care or other modalities. We have created this policy to assist in assuring that our patients receive the best care possible and we appreciate your assistance in enforcing it.

If you have any questions regarding our office policy on the use of narcotics, feel free to contact us so that we can discuss it. In addition, if you feel you need help with long-term (chronic) pain control, we will be happy to guide you to a pain management specialist.

You will be asked to indicate that you have read the above information and understand our narcotic pain medication policy by signing a separate form. Again, our concern is to provide you with the best results possible