



NOTICE TO PATIENTS: New limits on prescriptions for acute and post-operative pain

Effective Jan. 1, 2018, North Carolina law (the STOP Act of 2017) limits the amount of pain medication that may be prescribed to treat pain from most injuries and surgeries.

Q: How does the STOP Act limit pain prescriptions?

A: The law restricts the amount of certain types of pain medication that may be prescribed for acute pain. The STOP Act limits initial prescriptions for **post-operative pain** to no more than a **7-day supply**. The Act limits initial prescriptions for **all other types of acute pain** to no more than a **5-day supply**.

Q: Are prescriptions for chronic pain subject to the limits?

A: No.

Q: What types of medications are subject to the limits?

A: The STOP Act limits apply only to Schedule II and Schedule III opioids or narcotics, specifically when they are prescribed for acute pain. Examples of Schedule II opioids include OxyContin and Percocet (brand names for oxycodone). Tylenol #3 (acetaminophen and codeine) is an example of a Schedule III opioid.

Q: Can patients who are still in pain after finishing an initial prescription get a refill?

A: Yes. Acute pain patients who are still hurting after finishing a 5- or 7-day supply should contact the practice. The prescriber may issue an appropriate refill, if he or she determines one is needed.

To learn more about the STOP Act and other opioid initiatives, visit: www.ncmedboard.org/safeopioids