

# Murphy Pain Center Patient Education Points

## **Proper Use of Controlled Substances**

- Read the prescription container label each time to confirm the dosage.
- Never use the medication after the expiration date.
- Never share the medication with others. It is dangerous and illegal to share, sell, or give away controlled substances.
- Do not take the medication with alcohol or other sedatives.
- Do not take medications to promote sleep that are not medically prescribed for that purpose.
- Never break, crush, or chew medications unless directed by your prescriber to do so.
- Immediately contact the physician's office (or call 911 if necessary) to report any adverse reaction.
- Patients with low or impaired vision should wear glasses when taking medications and not take medications in the dark.
- External heat, fever and exertion can increase the absorption of transdermal products leading to potentially fatal overdose.
- Carefully follow instructions for use, including timing of doses; whether to take the medication with or without food; and any foods or other medications to avoid while taking the medication.

**Driving and Work Safety** • Controlled substances may cause sleepiness, clouded thinking, decreased concentration, slower reflexes, or incoordination, all of which may endanger the patient and others when driving or operating certain type of machinery. Avoid driving or engaging in other potentially dangerous work or other activities, for a specific period of time until the initial effects of the controlled substances no longer create such dangers. Ingesting other substances, such as alcohol, benzodiazepines, or some cold remedies, at the same time you are taking the controlled substances prescribed or dispensed may increase cognitive and motor impairment.

**Pregnancy** • Especially important for any female patient between the ages of 14 to 55 years of age with child bearing potential, there are potential risks and benefits of controlled substance use during pregnancy. Do not use controlled substances unless the benefits of such use outweigh the risk. If pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or in the likelihood that you may become pregnant, you and your obstetrician must make an individualized and deliberate determination that the benefits of prescribing or dispensing controlled substances sufficiently outweigh the risks for you and your baby. If there are any signs of adverse reaction or side effects, or conditions creating risk of danger to the patient or fetus, contact your physician immediately, go to the emergency room or call 911.

**Potential for Overdose** • The use of controlled substances creates a risk of respiratory depression, which may result in serious harm or death. Be watchful for the following warning signs of over-medication: intoxicated behavior, such as confusion, slurred speech, or stumbling; feeling dizzy or faint; acting very drowsy or groggy; unusual snoring, gasping, or snorting during sleep; and/or difficulty waking up from sleep or difficulty in staying awake. Immediately call 911 or an emergency service upon observing or experiencing any of the following conditions: patient cannot be aroused or wakened or is unable to talk after being awakened; patient has shortness of breath, slow or light breathing, or stopped breathing; gurgling noises coming from the patient's mouth or throat; patient's body is limp, seems lifeless; patient's face is pale or clammy; patient's fingernails or lips are turning purple or blue; and/or patient's heartbeat is slow, unusual, or stopped.

**Safe Storage** • There is always the potential for partners, family members or others to improperly obtain the patient's controlled substances. Maintain the controlled substances prescribed or dispensed in the original container. Store controlled substances in a locked cabinet or other secure storage unit, that is cool, dry, and out of direct sunlight such as: an existing safe, a cut-proof travel bag, a portable lock box designed for travel, or a locking medical box. You are discouraged from storing controlled substances in an unlocked medicine cabinet; in your car; or in a refrigerator or freezer unless specifically recommended by the prescriber or pharmacist. Immediately notify the physician if any controlled substances prescribed or dispensed by the physician are stolen or improperly taken by another individual.

**Proper Disposal** • Safely and appropriately dispose of unused controlled substances that have been prescribed or dispensed. You should promptly dispose of unused controlled substances after the expiration date of the prescription or after the patient no longer requires the controlled substances to treat the medical condition. In order to safely dispose of controlled substances, the patient should turn in the unused controlled substances as part of an approved governmental drug take-back program. There are some controlled substances that may be flushed down the toilet and most may be placed in a sealed plastic bag with coffee grounds or kitty litter and thrown in the trash (preferably when no one is there to observe-to minimize scavenging and pilfering by those seeking the leftover medications). Remove any identifying information, including the prescription number, from an empty controlled substance container and then properly dispose of the empty container.

**I have read this document or it has been explained to be me by the Murphy Pain Center practitioners and/or staff. I fully understand the information presented. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.**

Patient Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_