



**Do
you
understand
your
responsibilities
when you are
taking a
controlled-substance
medication**

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The American Society of Pain Educators, the only national organization solely addressing pain-related education, wants you to know that if you take a controlled substance (medication like opioid pain relievers, sleeping pills, barbiturates, and stimulants) you are required to do certain things. Controlled-substance medicines are highly regulated by the government. They help people in need, but they are also tragically misused by people wanting to get high.

Today, the majority of drug diversion—taking drugs out of legitimate dispensing channels to use or sell—happens through friends and family members. While you think your medicines are safe, your loved ones and friends may be slipping a few pills out of your pill bottle. You may believe that you are the owner of your medicine because your insurance paid for it on your behalf or you paid cash, but you are never allowed to sell your medicine to others, give away any of your medicine, or share your medicine with anyone under any circumstances. It is just that simple.

Here's what you need to do with all of your controlled-substance medications:

Lock them up! Do not put your Vicodin[®], OxyContin[®], Percocet[®], Ritalin[®], Concerta[®], Xanax[®], Valium[®], Seconal[®], or any controlled substance in a medicine cabinet where others can access it.

Never remove these medications from their prescription medication bottles until you are going to take a dose. Controlled substances must always be stored in a labelled medication bottle.

Keep your medications in a special place, and do not tell anyone except your primary caregiver where that place is.

Do not tell friends and family what medications you are taking unless they have a legitimate medical reason to know.

When you pick up medications at the pharmacy, put them in a secure place right away, and go directly home to store them safely.

Treat controlled-substance medications like cash—don't leave them out in view, don't carry them loose in your pocket, and don't expect them to be replaced if you lose them.

Controlled-substance medications often have special time-release features that allow you to only take them once or twice daily. Don't take more of your drug than your doctor has prescribed. Never crush, smash, or chew hard pills or tablets. Don't open capsules unless you are directed by a prescriber to do so. Dangerous, life-threatening levels of medication occur when time-release mechanisms are changed. Oral medications are never intended to be chewed, crushed, snorted, or injected into veins. Many Americans die yearly because of these activities. Don't be one of them.

Some medications change the way other medications work, so try to have one prescriber/physician (or as few as possible) for all of your medications. Fill all of your prescriptions at a single pharmacy. Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals who know which medications can be taken at the same time. They will work with your doctors to make sure you get the safest, most effective combinations.

Prescription opioid pain relievers are frequently abused. They are increasingly used by people ages 15 to 25 for the purpose of getting high. While you may never take your medication to get high, be aware that others, even people whom you would never expect (like your children and grandchildren) may do so. Their illegal use of your medications is causing our emergency rooms to see many drug overdoses, and overdose often leads to death. A little safekeeping and a healthy degree of suspicion on your part will help all of us control the national problem of prescription medication abuse, misuse, and diversion. We are all part of the solution to this problem.

For additional information, please refer to:

www.operationmedicinecabinetnj.com

www.paineducators.org