



Safer use of prescription opioid pain medication

When you fill a prescription at the pharmacy, your health plan and your pharmacist routinely check to make sure your prescription is correct, there are no interactions with other medications you might be taking, and that the drug is right for you. We also conduct safety reviews to monitor the safe use of prescription opioids and other frequently misused drugs. These reviews are especially important if you have more than one doctor who prescribes these drugs. In some cases, your health plan or pharmacist may need to talk to your doctor first before your pharmacy can fill your prescription.

Your health plan or pharmacist may do a safety review when you ask to fill an opioid prescription that meets the following conditions:

7-Day Supply Limit for Opioid-Naïve Members (7D)	You may be limited to an initial 7-day supply or less if you have not recently filled an opioid pain medication.
Cumulative Morphine Milligram Equivalent (MME) Opioid Safety Edit	You may be limited to a specified cumulative dosage. This is designed to monitor safe dosing levels of opioids for individuals who may be taking more than one opioid drug for pain management.
Opioids and Drugs to Treat Substance Use Disorder like buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®)	Your health plan alerts the pharmacy. The pharmacist reviews the issue of clinical concern.
Opioids and Benzodiazepines like Alprazolam (Xanax®), Diazepam (Valium®)	Your health plan alerts the pharmacy. The pharmacist reviews the issue of clinical concern.
Opioids and Prenatal Vitamins	Your health plan alerts the pharmacy. The pharmacist reviews the issue of clinical concern.
Opioids and Carisoprodol	Your health plan alerts the pharmacy. The pharmacist reviews the issue of clinical concern.
Duplicate Therapy: Taking two Short-Acting Opioids at the same time	Your health plan alerts the pharmacy. The pharmacist reviews the issue of clinical concern.
Duplicate Therapy: Taking two Long-Acting Opioids at the same time	Your health plan alerts the pharmacy. The pharmacist reviews the issue of clinical concern.
Opioids containing Acetaminophen (more than 4 grams per day of Acetaminophen)	Your health plan alerts the pharmacy. The pharmacist reviews the issue of clinical concern.

If your pharmacy can't fill your prescription as written, your doctor can call your health plan to get approval from UnitedHealthcare® before you fill your prescriptions. If your doctor prescribes an amount that's more than your health plan allows or thinks is right for your situation, your doctor can ask the plan to cover the additional amount. You may also ask your health plan for a decision before you go to the pharmacy so you'll know ahead of time if your plan will cover the drug.

Talk with your doctor

Talk with your doctor about all your pain treatment options, including if taking an opioid medication is right for you. You might be able to take other drugs or try other ways to help manage your pain with less risk.

If opioids are necessary, talk to your doctor about only prescribing the dosage and quantity needed to treat your pain and limiting the amount per prescription to a one month supply if not new to opioid medications.

Your doctor may also prescribe Naloxone, a drug that rapidly reverses the effects of an opioid overdose.

What works best is different for each patient. Treatment decisions to start, stop, or reduce prescription opioids should be made by you and your doctor. For more information on safe and effective pain management, visit [HHS.gov/opioids](https://www.hhs.gov/opioids).

Questions?

Call the number on your health plan ID card.

