

**VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of
Opioid Therapy for Chronic Pain**

KEY POINTS

1. Use opioid therapy when other pain therapies are inadequate
2. Determine goal of therapy with patient and caregivers
3. Opioid therapy for chronic pain has an average decrease in pain score of 30%, with a similar incidence of significant adverse effects
4. Assure safety—do no harm. Optimize therapy through trial and titration based on assessment
5. Obtain comprehensive assessment of the patient before initiating therapy
6. Regularly assess adverse effects, adherence to treatment plan, efficacy, and satisfaction

7. Develop an opioid therapy agreement with the patient to define responsibilities and expectations of both the patient and the provider
8. Educate patient about therapy, adverse effects and withdrawal
9. Apply multimodal adjunctive therapy as indicated by the patient and disease process
10. Accurate documentation of all prescriptions, agreements and assessments
11. Refer and/or consult with pain clinic or substance-use specialty when needed
12. Discontinue opioid therapy when it is not indicated

VA access to full guideline: <http://www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg/cpg.htm>

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DoD access to full guideline: <http://www.qmo.amedd.army.mil>

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