

SWEDISH NEUROSCIENCE INSTITUTE

# Pain Medication Prescription Policy

Your doctor may give you pain medications (opioids) after surgery. They have many side effects and risks and they may not help pain caused by nerve irritation or injury. They may be used in the short term, but are not usually appropriate for long-term use.

## Common Side Effects:

- Sleepiness
- Slowed breathing
- Nausea
- Itching
- Constipation
- Dry-mouth
- Depression
- Anxiety

It is the policy of the surgeons at the Swedish Neuroscience Institute to prescribe opioid pain medication only to patients who have had surgery.

For patients who have undergone surgery, opioid pain medication prescriptions will be provided for the first six weeks after surgery. At the six-week follow-up appointment, if you still need pain medication, only one more refill will be provided.

After that time, it is the patient's responsibility to follow-up with their primary-care doctor for continued medications. If you need a referral to a pain-management specialist, we will be happy to do this at the six-week follow-up appointment or earlier. If you currently see a pain specialist, please provide their name and location.

## Long-Term Side Effects:

- Low testosterone (men) with weaker bones
- Infertility
- Muscle weakness
- Higher risk of bone breaks
- Feeling more pain
- Lower sex drive and performance
- Depression
- Addiction

Please be sure to schedule a follow-up appointment with your primary-care doctor or pain specialist before your surgery. Keep in mind that many physicians are booked four to six weeks out.

Our office needs 48 hours' notice for prescription refills. Refills cannot be made during the weekend, after hours, or on holidays. Refills for category II opioid medications require picking up the signed paper prescription at the office to take to your preferred pharmacy. Unlike other medications, opioid pain medications, by law, require a signed prescription from the doctor. It must be brought to a pharmacy in person by the patient, a family member or a friend.