

CDC guideline for prescribing opioids for chronic pain—United States, 2016.

March 30, 2016

Dowell D, Haegerich TM, Chou R. CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain - United States, 2016. MMWR Recomm Rep. 2016;65(1):1-49. doi:10.15585/mmwr.rr6501e1.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/cdc-guideline-prescribing-opioids-chronic-pain-united-states-2016>

[Opioid](#) pain medications carry high risk for [adverse drug events](#) and [misuse](#). Due to climbing rates of opioid use and associated adverse events, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released new guidelines for prescribing opioid medications for chronic pain. These guidelines do not apply to patients receiving cancer treatment, palliative care, or end-of-life care. The authors recommend using opioids for chronic pain only if nonopioid medications and nonpharmacologic approaches to chronic pain are not effective and prescribing immediate-release instead of long-acting medications. For acute pain, they recommend limiting duration of therapy, stating that more than 1 week of medications should rarely be needed. The guidelines also suggest minimizing concurrent use of opioids and other sedating medications and dispensing naloxone to prevent overdoses. A previous [WebM&M commentary](#) describes an adverse event related to opioids.

The guidelines were [updated](#) in 2022.