

How to Safely Take Prescription Opioid Pills for Acute Pain

Step 1: Manage pain and expectations

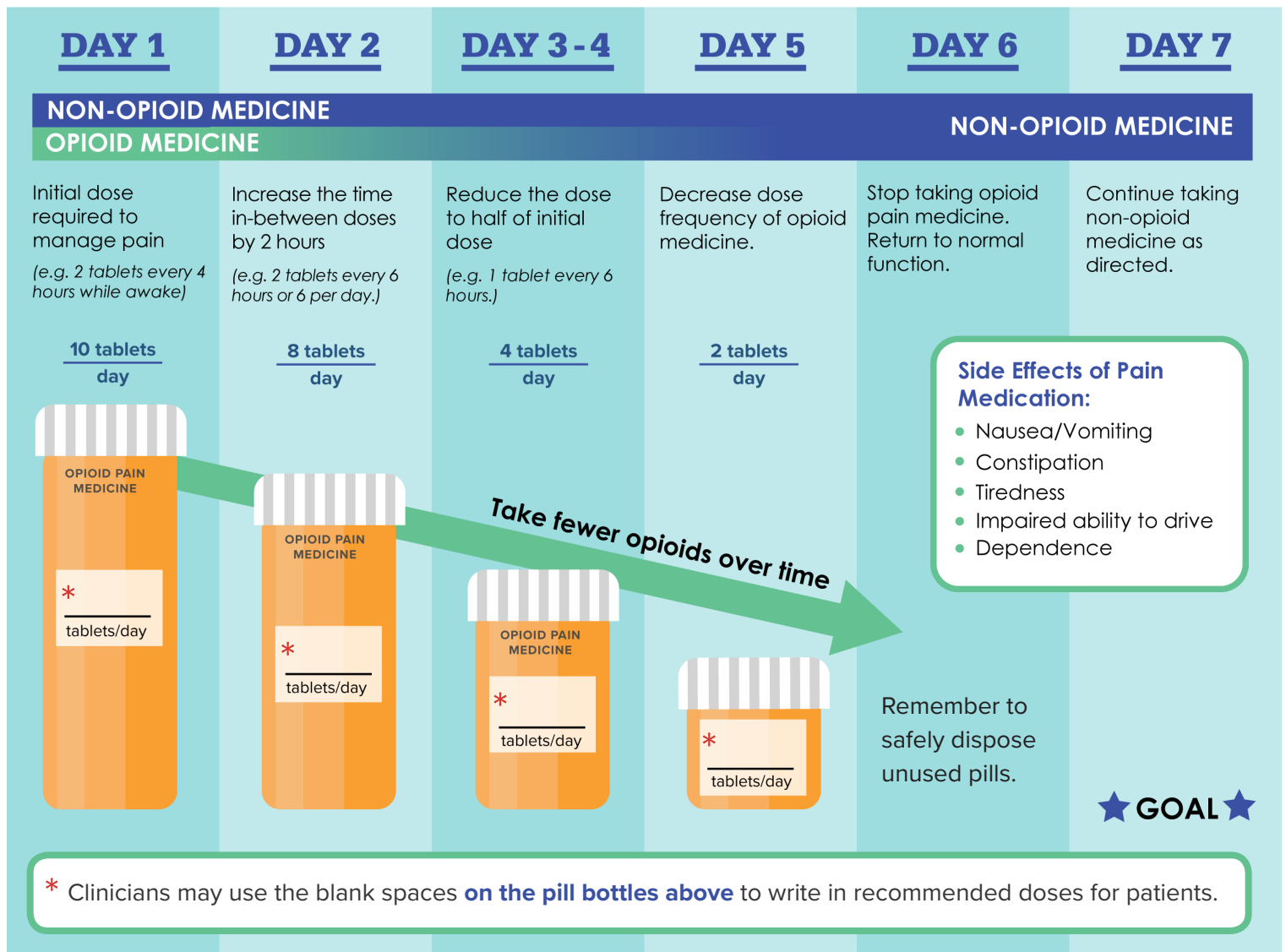
Acute pain can result from a procedure, an injury or sudden condition. This pain, left untreated, can interfere with your work, sleep and daily life. It is important to know what to expect in your healthcare so you can take care of your pain with the help of your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Ice or heat can be helpful, in addition to special stretches or exercises.

Step 2: Take pain medicine safely and effectively

Clinicians often recommend taking safer, non-prescription pain medicine such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen alone or with prescription pain pills. Prescription pain pills, particularly opioids, have risks including addiction or getting hooked on them. So, it is important to stop taking opioids as soon as your function improves.

Step 3: Transition off opioid pills used for acute pain

A schedule, such as the example below, may help track medication use to reduce the side effects as well as the number of pills needed.



Step 4: At your follow-up clinician visit, discuss safe disposal of any unused medicine.