



# THE CHATTER

Oral Health Advice from Delta Dental of Arkansas

## Opioid Exposure After Dental Procedures – Know Your Risk!



If you or a loved one has had a major dental procedure, chances are high that opioids were prescribed to manage pain afterwards. While we all want to lessen the amount of pain we feel after these types of procedures, there are other choices that reduce the chances of prescription drug abuse. If you do have to take an opioid for dental pain, realize that they are powerful, addictive medications.

### OPIOID FACTS

More than **200 million** prescriptions for opioids are dispensed each year in America.



More than **100** people ***DIE EVERY DAY*** from an opioid overdose.

#### What are opioids?

Opioids are a class of drugs prescribed to relieve or moderate severe pain. They also include imitation versions like fentanyl and the illegal substance heroin.

#### Names of Common Opioids

- Codeine
- Fentanyl (Duragesic®)
- Hydrocodone/acetaminophen (Vicodin®, Norco®)
- Methadone
- Morphine (Kadian®, MS Contin®)
- Oxycodone (OxyContin®, Percocet®)

**45%** of first-time opioid exposure occurs immediately after a major dental procedure



while more than **90%** of dental pain lasts 3 days or less.

## Reducing Your Risk



#### Know Your Options

Consider ways to manage your pain that do not involve a prescription, such as over-the-counter medications and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID), which may actually be more effective. You may be able to manage without any prescription pain medication at all!

#### Minimize Usage

Always take the prescribed dosage and minimize usage whenever possible. Unlike an antibiotic, you do not need to finish the entire prescription.

#### Be Aware of Side Effects

Even when taken as directed, opioids can cause a wide range of side effects including nausea, sleepiness and depression.

#### Prevent Harmful Drug Interactions

Let your dentist know all other medications you're taking. Certain medications, such as those for sleep, anxiety, depression and seizures, are particularly dangerous when mixed with opioids.

#### Don't Save Unused Prescription Pain Medications

Properly dispose of any unused prescriptions at pharmacy or law enforcement drop-off locations.