

## Introductory Note

The grant project titled **Community Pharmacist Integration into Contingency Management and Education for Opioid Exposed Patients** sets out to position pharmacists to address the opioid epidemic, which remains a crisis despite the plethora of public and privately funded programs. As one of the most accessible healthcare professionals, community and ambulatory care pharmacists are highly qualified to participate in a novel team-based approach to: assist and coach patients; participate in contingency management (a type of behavioral therapy in which individuals are 'reinforced', or rewarded, for evidence of positive behavioral change); while using non-prescription multi-modal options as a new intervention. Informational leaflets have been prepared as part of offering multi-modal options in the context of patient-pharmacist dialogue, and can be stapled onto a prescription relating to pain management or substance use disorder medication.

The use of informational leaflets (bag stuffers) have been prepared to be used after reviewing and completing three educational continuing pharmacy education (CPE) modules developed under the grant titled:

### **REDUCING THE BURDEN OF OPIOID DOSE TAPERING USING NON-PRESCRIPTION MODALITIES: Iron and Magnesium – MODULE 1**

#### **CE Module II – Sleep Quality, Gastrointestinal Health and Allergies While Minimizing Opioid Exposure**

#### **CE Module III - Important OTC and Non-Pharmacological Interventions Impacting Opioid Exposure and the Burden of Weaning**

These modules have been written by the project lead, Elizabeth Dragatsi, RPh, BCPS, and peer reviewed by Stephanie Nichols, PharmD, BCPS, BCPP, FCCP, Dr. Noah Nesin, MD, FAACP, and Megan Jennison, PharmD., and may be accessed at:

[www.CEImpact.com](http://www.CEImpact.com)

October 31, 2019 to October 31, 2020, any US pharmacist can access and complete the activity for CPE credit at no charge.

Any person may register on the website, access and read course contents and waive CPE credit for one's own personal information out of interest.

If you have any thoughts or feedback you would like to share, please contact:

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This project has been made possible with a grant from the





## MAGNESIUM: AN IMPORTANT SUPPLEMENT

**Magnesium** is an important dietary supplement that can help the body deal with pain, nerve pain, migraines, and muscle distress. Magnesium is best utilized by the body through natural sources such as food in a regular diet. There are supplements that can be utilized that you can talk with your provider and pharmacist about dosages and best product for you and how best to take daily. Some medicines can interact with magnesium and there are certain diseases that people have to be careful about how to take the medicine and how much per day.

Proper magnesium levels in the body **benefit**:

- Bone health
- Calcium absorption
- Diabetes
- Heart health
- Migraine headaches
- Premenstrual syndrome
- Relieving anxiety
- Pain

Low magnesium in people can have symptoms such as;

- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fatigue and weakness
- Numbness and tingling
- Muscle cramps

**Dosages** for daily supplements depend on age and gender. For adults the dosages range from 300 to 400 mg per day. *Please talk with your provider and pharmacist for recommendations.*

Magnesium is necessary and safe to take with proper advice from your provider or pharmacist. Some **side effects** to watch out for and may need a consult from your provider or pharmacist are as follows:

- Diarrhea
- Cramping
- Nausea

People with kidney issues should not take magnesium supplements without advice of their provider.

The **best food sources for magnesium** are seeds and nuts, dark green vegetables, whole grains, and beans. There are foods that have magnesium added to them as well, such as cereals and certain foods (check out the label on the food product for amounts of magnesium).

Foods such as the following are good sources of magnesium:

- Sunflower Seeds
- Almonds
- Sesame seeds
- Cashews
- Shredded wheat
- Soymilk
- Black beans
- Oatmeal
- Broccoli
- And many more

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### Questions? Ask a Pharmacist!

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## A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP CAN HELP

### Are you having trouble getting to sleep?

The first step is to identify and treat the reason you can't sleep. It might be pain, shortness of breath due to heart issues, anxiety, or depression. Talk with your provider about these issues so that they can help you.

Certain drugs may be affecting your sleep, as well. Alcohol, caffeine, decongestants, diuretics, steroids, stimulants or other medications in your body might be keeping you awake. Your pharmacist or provider could help you identify this and make a plan.

### Develop a Sleep Plan

It is sometimes helpful to develop a daily "sleep plan." This would include any of the following:

- Make sure the bedroom is dark and quiet
- Go to bed at the same time each day
- Daytime naps are not helpful if you sleep longer than 30 minutes
- The bedroom should only be for sleep and other appropriate activity (NO TV or screens)
- Keep clocks faced away from your face to prevent clock watching anxiety
- If you can't fall asleep, get up and do something else, like read a book or magazine. Phone or computer screens are not helpful.

## A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP CAN HELP

- Figure out a routine before bed, like reading, listening to relaxing music, or stretching
- Do not exercise right before getting ready to sleep (do this earlier in the day). Going for a walk during the day can help you sleep later.
- Avoid large snacks or meals before bedtime
- Caffeine and some medications should not be taken later in the day unless your provider or pharmacist has advised this.

Some supplement products may also help with sleep, but should only be taken if a medical provider or pharmacist advises it. Supplements may interact with your other medications, so check with your provider or pharmacist first.

Two common supplements are melatonin and valerian. Both of these are over the counter products. They may react with your medications and body differently, but have been effective for many people. Certain foods can also help with sleep! Talk to a pharmacist for more details.

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If you would like references for this information, email: [info@dragatsi.com](mailto:info@dragatsi.com) or call toll free 1-877-219-6155.



## HOW TO READ A VITAMIN LABEL

### 1. % Daily Value (DV)

Recommended nutrient intake levels for healthy people. This percentage shows how much of the nutrient is in a single serving.

### 2. Serving Size Shows

how much of the supplement you should take to reach the percent or amounts on the label.

### 3. Scientific Units

Unit labels such as "I.U." or "mg" are ways to measure amounts.

### 4. Necessary Nutrients without DV

These are contained in supplement to show consumers what other substances are in this vitamin.

**5. Manufacturer's Contact Information** This usually includes a toll free phone number and website if you have questions.

**6. Expiration Dates** Shows how long the ingredients will be effective. Vitamins should not be used after they expire.

**7. Lot Numbers** An ID number for the product

**8. Suggested Use** How to safely and correctly obtain the recommended amount of vitamins.

Supplement Facts		Serving Size 1 Tablet	
Amount Per Tablet	% Daily Value	Amount Per Tablet	% Daily Value
Vitamin A 5,000 I.U.	100%	Iodine 150 mcg	100%
Vitamin C 120 mg	20%	Magnesium 100 mg	25%
Vitamin D 400 I.U.	100%	Zinc 15 mg	100%
Vitamin E 50 I.U.	100%	Selenium 25 mcg	38%
Vitamin K 100 mcg	31%	Copper 2 mg	100%
Thiamin 1.5 mg	100%	Manganese 2 mg	100%
Riboflavin 1.7 mg	100%	Chromium 120 mcg	100%
Niacin 20 mg	100%	Molybdenum 25 mcg	33%
Vitamin B6 2 mg	100%	Chloride 36 mg	1%
Folate 400 mcg	100%	Potassium 40 mg	1%
Vitamin B12 6 mcg	100%	Boron 150 mcg	1%
Biotin 30 mcg	10%	Nickel 5 mcg	1%
Paranthemic Acid 10 mg	100%	Silicon 2 mg	1%
Calcium 100 mg	10%	Tin 10 mcg	1%
Iron 9 mg	50%	Vanadium 10 mcg	1%
Phosphorus 77 mg	6%	Lutein 250 mcg	1%

\*Daily Value not established.

Distributed by: Nature Made Nutritional Products, Mission Hills, CA 91345-9906, U.S.A. 1-800-278-2878 • www.naturemade.com

No Artificial Colors • No Artificial Flavors • No Preservatives • No Chemical Solvents or Yeast

SUGGESTED USE: Take one tablet daily with a meal. Keep bottle tightly closed. Store in a cool, dry place.

Do not use if imprinted seal under cap is broken or missing.

WARNING: Accidental overdose of iron-containing products is a leading cause of fatal poisoning in children under 6. Keep this product out of reach of children. In case of accidental overdose, call a doctor or poison control center immediately.

USP Essential Balance tablets made to Nature Made's guaranteed purity and potency standards.

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## HOW TO USE VITAMINS SAFELY



There are dietary supplements that can help the body deal with pain, surgery, and physical diseases and disorders. One example is magnesium, one of the minerals that your body needs to be healthy. Without it, you may experience nerve pain, arthritic pain, or migraines. There are other types of vitamins and minerals that your body needs, too. These can be found in supplements that you can add to your regular diet. Talk with your provider to find out more about other vitamins and minerals that could potentially help improve your health.

### Choose Quality Supplements

The quality of the supplements you select is as important as the type of products you take. When you look at a product, consider these questions:

- Is the product from a reputable manufacturer?
- Does the label make claims that seem too good to be true? Use caution.
- Does the box have a phone number or website?

### Know Safe Supplement Tips

- Read the label. (See back for help!)
- Follow the instructions carefully
- Look for warnings statements, especially if you take other medications, are pregnant, have allergies, etc.
- Share all supplement use with your provider

## Questions? Ask a Pharmacist!

Our PCHC Pharmacy Staff is here to help you. Call **207.992.4100** or visit any of our Pharmacy locations:

### Penobscot Community Health Center

1012 Union Street, Bangor

### Helen Hunt Health Center

242 Brunswick Street, Old Town

### Brewer Medical Center

735 Wilson St., Brewer

### Seaport Community Health Center

53 Schoodic Dr., Belfast

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**APhA**







## THE IMPORTANCE OF VITAMIN D

### Vitamin D is important for health!

Vitamin D helps us have strong bones and regulates inflammatory responses in many places in the body. Low Vitamin D levels are linked with heart disease, diabetes, obesity and cancer.

### Vitamin D comes from different sources

Your body can make Vitamin D from the sun. If you are unable to get enough sun exposure, or if you are an older person, you might not be getting enough Vitamin D to be healthy. We can correct this by eating certain foods or taking vitamin supplements.

You can get Vitamin C from foods, too!

- Milk, cheese, or other dairy products with supplemental Vitamin D
- Egg yolks
- Cod liver oil, sardines, salmon, tuna, mackerel, or shrimp
- Beef Liver
- Mushrooms

### Children, pregnant or lactating women, and aging adults might need a supplement of Vitamin D

Not getting enough Vitamin D leads to rickets (bow-legged, weak painful knees). Very low levels of Vitamin D puts you at risk for serious health problems.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF VITAMIN D

### When and how often should I get my Vitamin D levels checked by my provider?

You should check your Vitamin D levels once a year, ideally around the time the weather becomes colder, which is also when we get less sunlight each day. This is important if you suffer from pain, are weaning off opioid medications, or are older than 50.

### Do not exceed these dosages!

Infants and children should receive Vitamin D daily only under the supervision of a provider. Adults' vitamin D dosages are usually at 800 to 1000 Units per day. Your provider may suggest a higher amount. Adults should not take more than 4,000 Units per day. If you do, your body may have trouble handling calcium or other serious health issues.

**Important Note:** You only need 10-15 minutes of sun on your face or arms to get enough Vitamin D for the day! Too much sun can be harmful to your skin. Be careful to avoid sunburn and use sunscreen.

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## USING SUPPLEMENTS TO HELP WITH PAIN & RECOVERY

### Supplements may help with pain and recovery.

Did you know? Some supplements can help those who are dealing with pain, cravings, or addiction.

### This is best done under a Provider's supervision!

Tell your medical provider and your pharmacist what you are taking, so your medication list is complete on file. Some of these supplements can change how your other medicines work in your body.

### Supplements vs. Food

It is best to get all our vitamins and minerals in the food we eat each day. But sometimes prescription medications and age-related changes make it harder for our bodies to get vitamins and minerals from food. Your pharmacist can help you find what medications might be impacting you, and let you know if supplements may help. Supplements might work very well for you if you are in pain, trying to quit smoking or another addictive substance, or even trying to lose weight.

### Vitamin B1, B6, folic acid and B12 are important for nerve health

There are many foods and supplements that contain B1, B6, B12 and folic acid which your provider or pharmacist can help you identify.

## USING SUPPLEMENTS TO HELP WITH PAIN AND RECOVERY

### Low Vitamin A and C lead to sore skin and mucous membranes.

This is important if a poor diet results from drug addiction, poorly controlled diabetes, cancer or cancer treatment. These symptoms can make pain management, recovery, or weaning more difficult.

### Low iron in the blood can cause people to feel tired and makes you feel colder.

This can make you feel your pain more, or have stronger cravings. If your iron is really low, the heart can suffer, you could have chest pain, or you could feel bone pain (sternum, knees). Vegetable source iron is less constipating and is best absorbed when taken together with a Vitamin C source or supplement. There is a product on the market that combines vegetable iron, Vitamin C, Folic and Vitamin B12 in one tablet, and is inexpensive. Ask your pharmacist for help with this.

### Ask your Pharmacist for a list of food sources of vitamins or minerals mentioned above.

This will help you make your next grocery list a great one!

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## SMOKING AFFECTS THOSE IN RECOVERY

### Smoking Causes Lasting Effects on the Body

Cigarette smoke contains chemicals that have been linked to the development of lung disease and cancer. While it may be difficult to quit smoking while weaning off of opioids, it can help you recover from this disease.

### This is best done under a provider's supervision!

It is always best to wean off nicotine, opioids, or other substances with the support and help of your provider. Your provider can monitor your health and support you in this process. They might even suggest you take time off work. If you need to take time off work while in recovery, this is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act for opioid weaning and pain management.

### Smoking During Recovery May Be Painful

When in recovery, you may experience anxiety or cravings, which can cause your body pain. Smoking lowers Vitamin D levels, causes bone breakdown, increases blood sugar, and heartburn. Nicotine in cigarettes can also increase the pain that you feel while recovering from substance use.

## SMOKING AFFECTS THOSE IN RECOVERY

Here are some ideas to cut down nicotine intake if you smoke.

- There are a few medications that can help you quit smoking such as bupropion and varenicline. There are also other sources of nicotine that can help stop cravings such as gum, lozenges, and patches.
- Your provider or pharmacist can help you with a plan for using nicotine replacement products.
- It's important to stay connected to others! Team up with a coach, for example freely provided by the CDC (1-800-QUIT-NOW). Your pharmacist has information about other programs, as well.
- Your insurance may cover the costs of visits to your provider to help you quit smoking. If you are not insured, some providers or health centers offer a Sliding Fee Program to help you afford the health care you need. Contact your provider's office for more information.

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## HOW TO REDUCE AND STOP OPIOID USE

Taking a 'one step at a time' approach often results in not having to use opioids or narcotics at all. No one thing will do it all. Consulting your pharmacist and provider to help you to do this and this process is likely to have good results.

### **Pain can be reduced without medicine. Here are some tips.**

- Calm down. Cough. Drink cold water. Wiggle the front part of the ears that joins to the face. This helps your vagal nerve that goes deep inside you to help slow your heart down and reduce pain, including chest pain from angina.
- Think of something like your favorite memory or someone you like thinking about.
- Play some music you enjoy that relaxes you.
- Play a video game or some game or activity that ties up your mind.
- Spend time in a clean, tidy room with the right level of light that's comfortable.

### **Know your facts about pain medicine.**

Acetaminophen up to 3,000 mg/day is safe to use for mild to moderate pain. That's 2 of the 500 mg strength 3 times a day, or 2 of the 325 mg strength 4 times a day plus one extra at any time during the day.

Acetaminophen plus ibuprofen 400 mg has the same pain relieving power as one oxycodone w/ acetaminophen, hydrocodone w/ acetaminophen, or acetaminophen w/ Codeine #3® for most moderate to severe pain in the hands and legs and dental pain. If in doubt, ask your pharmacist or provider.

In addition, it is quite safe to use menthol products to put on the skin to help with joint and muscle pain. Ask your pharmacist or provider about adding a lidocaine skin product.

Pay attention to your stomach and intestinal health and your allergies! Often pain and worry will cause your stomach to be upset, and this leads to you feeling your pain more. Histamine produced by your body from upset stomach, allergies or muscle strain also may make you feel your pain more. Ranitidine or famotidine are good for stomach upset, and antihistamines for allergies. It's OK to take both types of these medications together if need be. Talk to your pharmacist or provider if you have more questions about this, and perhaps run your complete med list for interactions.

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Turmeric (curcumin) is gaining interest for treating inflammatory type pain (joints, muscles, radiation). Black pepper and a fatty drink such as almond milk or whole milk improve its final effect quite a bit. Some use it instead of ibuprofen, especially if they have kidney or heart disease. Check with the pharmacist for important drug interactions, especially drugs used to treat cancer and any others you may have concern about.

Find out from your pharmacist what vitamins and supplements help with different types of pain too. It is also useful to know what foods are rich in these vitamins and minerals so you can make food your ally!

There are foods that are not your ally, like those high in sugar. Food and drink high in sugar may make you feel good at first but will make you feel your pain quite a bit later. This could lead you to crave more pain medicine (or street drug) if that is being used.

If you're feeling close to crisis but not quite there, talk to someone at the **Maine Warmline** (toll free number is: **1-866-771-9276** or **1-866-771-WARM**).

Call the **Crisis Line** if you're feeling much worse at **1-888-568-1112**.





## HOW TO KEEP OPIOID USE TO A MINIMUM

Whether it is a prescription after surgery for pain, or use without a prescription, here are some tips to keep opioid use to a minimum. It only takes 3-7 days for changes to occur in the brain that lead to feeling pain that exists despite healing after the original cause has gone away--along with cravings. That's why it's important to address the right things early so this doesn't happen. If changes in the brain have already set in, it's important to seek treatment, and learn self-care techniques which can really make a difference. The pharmacist and the pharmacy team are trained to help you as you work your way through these issues.

### **Substance Use Disorder can be treated successfully.**

What used to be called 'addiction' is better understood now to be 'substance use disorder'. Treatment options are also better understood. A very small percentage of affected people recover without treatment with medication. However, 'cold turkey' and using medication for rapid taper alone can result in a high death rate in the following year(s). For most people, choosing one of three medications for long-term use reduces or stops cravings.

When combined with weekly or every other week counselling that deals with self-care and problem-solving, it is possible for better human relationships and meaningful life activity. If cost or transportation is a barrier, most clinics have arrangements to help with this.

### **Recovery is Lifelong.**

The longer chronic pain or substance use disorder has been in place, the longer treatment with medication and counselling will take. Recovery is lifelong. It is very easy for the brain to flip back to previous patterns under the wrong circumstances. Counselling helps to be prepared for these types of triggers.

### **Talk with your provider and pharmacist.**

Self-care is just as important in dealing with chronic pain and substance use disorder as it is for the diabetic patient. Important items include over-the-counter products for pain, well-chosen vitamins and minerals, antihistamines, stomach upset medications, food or products that promote good intestinal health, and even choosing the right snacks. Stopping smoking and use of nicotine-containing products is linked to successful recovery.

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## We understand.

All of us, even pharmacy staff have been affected by someone near us dying of drug overdose. You may find it hard to talk about buying an antidote (naloxone) for home use in case you or a family member or close friend are dealing with substance use disorder. It is not easy to open this kind of conversation in a pharmacy, despite the product being readily available. Ask the pharmacist for a more private spot to arrange for purchase if that's helpful. Buying a unit of naloxone may be the one chance for recovery that ends up working.

## Let's watch those numbers tumble.

This is not the first time opioid drug use has spiked in the country. Together, we can improve how we take care of ourselves and each other. Things will tend to chaos if we just do nothing. Directing and using our human energy in a good way to problem solve can lead to better lives, families, and our community's health.

