



For Your Health

Opioid prescriptions and the opioid crisis

Our state is experiencing an opioid crisis. Opioids are “chemical cousins” of heroin, and they are highly addictive. More than 700 people in Washington die each year because of opioid overdose.

Studies suggest the risk of ongoing opioid use rises dramatically with longer initial prescriptions. **Every additional day of use and every refill increases the risk.**

Why an opioid clinical policy?

The Health Care Authority’s opioid clinical policy is an addiction prevention and patient safety tool to protect patients and combat the opioid crisis.

When patients are prescribed more pills than they need for pain relief, leftover pills can be misused or sold.

The policy limits the number of pills in a prescription for short-term use:

- For children and adolescents age 20 or younger: About a three-day supply (18 pills or liquid doses)
- For adults age 21 or older: About a seven-day supply (42 pills or liquid doses)

Doctors can write a prescription for more when, in their judgment, a particular patient’s condition requires it.

For long-term use, the policy requires that your doctor follow standards to use these medications as safely as possible.

Opioid prescription limits do not apply to treatment for cancer pain, hospice care, palliative care, or end-of-life care.

When does this change happen?

The limits apply to prescriptions filled on or after November 1, 2017, for patients with Apple Health (Medicaid) coverage.

What do I need to do?

Nothing. Most of the time, the safest and most effective supply of pills will be below the policy limits. If your doctor determines you need more, he or she will follow a simple process to get the amount needed to treat your condition.

Why can adults get more pills than kids?

Children and adolescents are among our most vulnerable populations when it comes to opioid use. Often they first receive opioids after a dental procedure or a sprained ankle. The lower limit will provide pain relief while protecting their still-developing brains from longer exposure to addictive medications. Children also heal faster than adults.

Can I pay cash to get more pills than the policy allows?

No. In most circumstances it is unlawful for an Apple Health patient to pay cash for an opioid prescription.

What if I already take opioids chronically?

The limits do not apply to most patients already taking daily opioids.

Which drugs does the Apple Health Clinical Opioid Policy cover?

Butorphanol; Codeine; Fentanyl; Hydrocodone; Hydromorphone; Levorphanol; Meperidine; Morphine; Oxycodone; Oxymorphone; Pentazocine; Tapentadol; and Tramadol.

[English] Language assistance services, including interpreters and translation of printed materials, are available free of charge. Call 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).

[Amharic] የቋንቋ እገዛ አገልግሎት፣ አስተርጓሚ እና የሰነዶችን ትርጉም ጨምሮ በነጻ ይገኛል። 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711) ይደውሉ።

[Arabic] خدمات المساعدة في اللغات، بما في ذلك المترجمين الفوريين وترجمة المواد المطبوعة، متوفرة مجاناً، اتصل على رقم (TRS: 711) 1-800-562-3022.

[Burmese] ဘာသာပြန်ဆိုသူများနှင့် ထုတ်ပြန်ထားသည့် စာရွက်စာတမ်းများဘာသာပြန်ခြင်းအပါအဝင် ဘာသာစကားအထောက်အကူဝန်ဆောင်မှုများကို အခမဲ့ရနိုင်ပါသည်။ 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711) ကိုဖုန်းခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

[Cambodian] សេវាជំនួយភាសា រួមមានទាំងអ្នកបកប្រែផ្ទាល់មាត់ និង ការបកប្រែឯកសារបោះពុម្ព គឺអាចរកបានដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃ។ ហៅទូរស័ព្ទទៅលេខ 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711)។

[Chinese] 免费提供语言协助服务，包括口译员和印制资料翻译。请致电 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711)。

[Korean] 통역 서비스와 인쇄 자료 번역을 포함한 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711)번으로 전화하십시오.

[Laotian] ການບໍລິການດ້ານພາສາ, ລວມທັງການແປພາສາ ແລະ ການແປເອກສານຕີພິມ, ມີໄວ້ໃຫ້ຟຣີໂດຍບໍລິຄຳ. ໂທຫາເລກ 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).

[Oromo] Tajajilli gargaarsa afaanii, nama afaan hiikuu fi ragaalee maxxanfaman hiikuun, kaffaltii malee ni argattu. 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711) irratti bilbilaa.

[Persian] خدمات کمک زبانی، از جمله مترجم شفاهی و ترجمه اسناد و مدارک (مطالب) چاپی، بصورت رایگان ارائه خواهد شد. یا شماره 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711) تماس بگیرید.

[Punjabi] ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ—ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਕੀਤੀ ਚੋਈ ਸਮੱਗਰੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਨ੍ਹਵਾਦ ਸਮੇਤ—ਮੁਫ਼ਤ ਉਪਲੱਬਧ ਹਨ। 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711) 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ।

[Romanian] Serviciile de asistență lingvistică, inclusiv cele de interpretariat și de traducere a materialelor imprimate, sunt disponibile gratuit. Apelați 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).

[Russian] Языковая поддержка, в том числе услуги переводчиков и перевод печатных материалов, доступна бесплатно. Позвоните по номеру 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).

[Somali] Adeego caawimaad luuqada ah, ay ku jirto turjubaano afka ah iyo turjumid lagu sameeyo waraaqaha la daabaco, ayaa lagu helayaa lacag la'aan. Wac 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).

[Spanish] Hay servicios de asistencia con idiomas, incluyendo intérpretes y traducción de materiales impresos, disponibles sin costo. Llame al 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).

[Swahili] Huduma za msaada wa lugha, ikiwa ni pamoja na wakalimani na tafsiri ya nyaraka zilizochapishwa, zinapatikana bure bila ya malipo. Piga 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).

[Tagalog] Mga serbisyong tulong sa wika, kabilang ang mga tagapagsalin at pagsasalin ng nakalimbag na mga kagamitan, ay magagamit ng walang bayad. Tumawag sa 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).

[Tigrigna] ተርጓሚትን ናይ ዝተፀሓፉ ማተርያላት ትርጉምን ሓዲሱ ናይ ቋንቋ ሓዝ ግልጋሎት፤ ብዘይ ምንም ክፍሊት ይርከቡ። ብ 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711) ደውል።

[Ukrainian] Мовна підтримка, у тому числі послуги перекладачів та переклад друкованих матеріалів, доступна безкоштовно. Зателефонуйте за номером 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).

[Vietnamese] Các dịch vụ trợ giúp ngôn ngữ, bao gồm thông dịch viên và bản dịch tài liệu in, hiện có miễn phí. Gọi 1-800-562-3022 (TRS: 711).