Know the Facts About Pain Medications

THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL labels opioid abuse an epidemic. What do you need to know before you say “yes” to pain relief? All of these opioids are powerful painkillers and prone to abuse. Even though opioids are prescribed medications, they are extremely addictive and can lead to overdose or death.

Benzodiazepines (Klonopin, Valium, Xanax) a tranquilizer used to treat anxiety and other relation conditions.

Codeine used to relieve pain depending on dosage for a few hours.

Demerol (Meperidine) used to treat moderate to severe pain.

Dilaudid (Exalgo, Hydromorpone) mostly used in a hospital setting used for short term pain relief.

Fentanyl (Actiq, Duragesic, Sublimaze) 100 times stronger than Morphine, used for cancer patients or post-surgical patients with severe pain. Extremely potent, can reach deadly toxic levels if not managed within FDA approved limits.

Hydrocodone (Lortab, Norco, Vicodin, Zohydro) used to treat moderate to severe pain resulting from a chronic condition, injury or surgical or dental procedures.

Methadone (Dolophine, Methadose) mostly associated with helping those trying to quit heroin. However, can be used part of a physician monitored pain management program.

Morphine (Duramorph, MS Contin) used to treat severe pain related to cancer or cancer treatment.

Oxycodone (OxyContin, Percodan) a popular opioid prescription painkiller used for an around the clock treatment of moderate to severe pain.

Oxymorphone (Numorphan, Numorphone, Opana) used to treat moderate to severe pain.

Percocet (similar to OxyContin but contains a combination of acetaminophen and oxycodone) used to treat moderate to severe pain.

Going in for surgery or in pain? Ask your doctor about alternative therapies. As a recent New York Times article reported, a combination of Tylenol and Advil worked just as well as opioids for relief of pain in the emergency room, a randomized trial has found.

What are symptoms of abuse and addiction? Taking medication more frequently than prescribed, using medication for other symptoms than pain, requiring higher doses to get the same effect, taking others prescriptions or compulsive behaviors.

Where to get help if you think you have a problem?

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s National Hotline at https://www.samhsa.gov/ or call their confidential hotline: 1-800-662-HELP

Visit Facing Addiction’s online Addiction Resources Hub, https://resources.facingaddiction.org/