

C.A.R.E.S. MEDICAL CLINIC
LONG TERM PAIN MANAGEMENT

While narcotic medications are good for short term pain, studies demonstrate that they frequently do more harm than good for long term pain. (over 7 days) and do not improve your quality of life. Some of the problems include erectile dysfunction, accidents and injuries, dependence, need for increasing doses, increased fracture risk, and many other problems.

CARES is helping to protect your safety by complying with recommendations to implement a structured program for those having to take narcotics or sedatives for chronic pain. You will be asked to comply with this program in a formal agreement.

My first recommendation is for you to consider trying to taper off your medications over the next 3 months and see if you can come off of them. Current studies show that significant reduction in opioid dosing and/or discontinuation actually improves pain and improves quality of life. You are in LESS pain since coming off your opioid medications. "Less Pills, Less Pain" by Beth Darnell is an excellent book on ways to treat pain with less pills.

Some antidepressants and seizure medications can reduce the overall need for pain medication. Treating the underlying problem (back surgery, for example) can reduce pain. Injections of cortisone or local anesthetics, as well as procedures done to block pain by pain specialists can help in certain circumstances.

Some patients will actually do better in the long term by going through addiction counseling and getting off the medication altogether (if unable to do it on their own). At this point the amount of pain experienced may actually be lower than expected and one can then switch to a non-narcotic medication and seek out alternative therapy such as relaxation techniques, Physical therapy, neuromuscular therapy with massage or with Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation/ TENS unit.

If you have tried to come off the medications and were unsuccessful but you do not want to see a pain specialist you might consider going to a comprehensive program that specializes in taking patients off of pain medications. Some patients through the years have done this and say that they do not EVER want to take narcotics again. Their quality of life and happiness becomes significantly improved. You may look in the Yellow Pages or internet for area programs that offer drug addiction counseling and rehabilitation programs.

If you do not feel you can taper off your opioid medications and do not wish to follow our guidelines then you may wish a pain management clinic in the Calhoun, Etowah, Talladega, Birmingham area who as of today are currently taking new patients, again found on the internet or yellow pages.

NAME OF PATIENT: _____ DATE: _____

TO THE PATIENT: As a patient, you have the right to be informed about your condition and the recommended medical or diagnostic procedure or drug therapy to be used, so that you may make the informed decision whether or not to take the drug after knowing the risks and hazards involved. This disclosure is not meant to scare or alarm you, but rather it is an effort to make you better informed so that you may give or withhold your consent/permission to use the drug(s) recommended to you by me, as your physician. For the purpose of this agreement the use of the word "physician" is defined to include not only my physician but also my physician's authorized associates, technical assistants, nurses, staff, and other health care providers as might be necessary or advisable to treat my condition.

CONSENT TO TREATMENT AND/OR DRUG THERAPY: I voluntarily request C.A.R.E.S. MEDICAL CLINIC to treat my condition which has been explained to me as chronic pain. I hereby authorize and give my voluntary consent for my physician to administer or write prescription(s) for dangerous and/or controlled drugs (medications) as an element in the treatment of my chronic pain.

It has been explained to me that these medication(s) include opioid/narcotic drug(s), which can be harmful if taken without medical supervision. I further understand that these medication(s) may lead to physical dependence and/or addiction and may, like other drugs used in the practice of medicine, produce adverse side effects or results. The alternative methods of treatment, the possible risks involved, and the possibilities of complications have been explained to me as listed below. I understand that this listing is not complete, and that it only describes the most common side effects or reactions, and that death is also a possibility as a result from taking these medication(s).

THE SPECIFIC MEDICATION(S) THAT MY PHYSICIAN PLANS TO PRESCRIBE WILL BE DESCRIBED AND DOCUMENTED SEPARATE FROM THIS AGREEMENT. THIS INCLUDES THE USE OF MEDICATIONS FOR PURPOSES DIFFERENT THAN WHAT HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE DRUG COMPANY AND THE GOVERNMENT (THIS IS SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS "OFF-LABEL" PRESCRIBING). MY DOCTOR WILL EXPLAIN HIS TREATMENT PLAN(S) FOR ME AND DOCUMENT IT IN MY MEDICAL CHART.

I HAVE BEEN INFORMED AND understand that I will undergo medical tests and examinations before and during my treatment. Those tests include random unannounced checks for drugs and psychological evaluations if and when it is deemed necessary, and I hereby give permission to perform the tests or my refusal may lead to termination of treatment. The presence of unauthorized substances may result in my being discharged from your care.

For female patients only:

To the best of my knowledge **I am NOT pregnant.**

If I am not pregnant, I will use appropriate contraception/birth control during my course of treatment. I accept that it is **MY responsibility** to inform my physician immediately if I become pregnant.

If I am pregnant or am uncertain, I WILL NOTIFY MY PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY.

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All of the above possible effects of medication(s) have been fully explained to me and I understand that, at present, there have not been enough studies conducted on the long-term use of many medication(s) i.e. opioids/narcotics to assure complete safety to my unborn child(ren). With full knowledge of this, I consent to its use and hold my physician harmless for injuries to the embryo/ fetus / baby.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE MOST COMMON SIDE EFFECTS THAT COULD OCCUR IN THE USE OF THE DRUGS USED IN MY TREATMENT INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING: constipation, nausea, vomiting, excessive drowsiness, itching, urinary retention (inability to urinate), orthostatic hypotension(low blood pressure), arrhythmias(irregular heartbeat), insomnia, depression, impairment of reasoning and judgment, respiratory depression (slow or no breathing), impotence, tolerance to medication(s), physical and emotional dependence or even addiction, and death. I understand that it may be dangerous for me to operate an automobile or other machinery while using these medications and I may be impaired during all activities, including work.

The alternative methods of treatment, the possible risks involved, and the possibilities of complications have been explained to me, and I still desire to receive medication(s) for the treatment of my chronic pain.

The goal of this treatment is to help me gain control of my chronic pain in order to live a more productive and active life. I realize that I may have a chronic illness and there is a limited chance for complete cure, but the goal of taking medication(s) on a regular basis is to reduce (but probably not eliminate) my pain so that I can enjoy an improved quality of life. I realize that the treatment for some will require prolonged or continuous use of medication(s), but an appropriate treatment goal may also mean the eventual withdrawal from the use of all medication(s). My treatment plan will be tailored specifically for me. I understand that I may withdraw from this treatment plan and discontinue the use of the medication(s) at any time and that I will notify my physician of any discontinued use. I further understand that I will be provided medical supervision if needed when discontinuing medication use.

I understand that no warranty or guarantee has been made to me as to the results of any drug therapy or cure of any condition. The long-term use of medications to treat chronic pain is controversial because of the uncertainty regarding the extent to which they provide long-term benefit. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about my condition and treatment, risks of non-treatment and the drug therapy, medical treatment or diagnostic procedure(s) to be used to treat my condition, and the risks and hazards of such drug therapy, treatment and procedure(s), and I believe that I have sufficient information to give this informed consent.

PAIN MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT:

I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

That this pain management agreement relates to my use of any and all medication(s) (i.e., opioids, also called ‘narcotics, painkillers’, and other prescription medications, etc.) for chronic pain prescribed by my physician. I understand that there are federal and state laws, regulations and policies regarding the use and prescribing of controlled substance(s). **Therefore, medication(s) will only be provided so long as I follow the rules specified in this Agreement.**

My physician may at any time choose to discontinue the medication(s). Failure to comply with any of the following guidelines and/or conditions may cause discontinuation of medication(s) and/or my discharge from care and treatment. Discharge may be immediate for any criminal behavior:

- My progress will be periodically reviewed and, if the medication(s) are not improving my quality of life, the **medication(s) may be discontinued.**
- I will **disclose** to my physician **all medication(s)** that I take at any time, prescribed by any physician.
- I will use the medication(s) **exactly as directed by my physician.**
- I agree **not to** share, sell or otherwise permit others, including my family and friends, to have access to these medications.
- I will **not allow or assist in the misuse/diversion of my medication; nor will I give or sell them** to anyone else.
- All medication(s) must be obtained at **one pharmacy, where possible.** Should the need arise to change pharmacies, my physician must be informed. I will use only one pharmacy and I will provide my pharmacist a copy of this agreement. I authorize my physician to release my medical records to my pharmacist as needed.
- I understand that my medication(s) will be refilled on a regular basis. I understand that my prescription(s) and my medication(s) are exactly like money. **If either are lost or stolen, they may NOT BE REPLACED.**
- Refill(s) **will not be ordered before the scheduled refill date.** However, early refill(s) are allowed when I am traveling and I make arrangements in advance of the planned departure date. Otherwise, I will not expect to receive additional medication(s) prior to the time of my next scheduled refill, even if my prescription(s) run out.
- I will receive medication(s) **only from ONE physician** unless it is for an emergency **or** the medication(s) that is being prescribed by another physician is approved by my physician. Information that I have been receiving medication(s) prescribed by other doctors that has not been approved by my physician may lead to a discontinuation of medication(s) and treatment.
- If it appears to my physician that there are no demonstrable benefits to my daily function or quality of life from the medication(s), then **my physician may try alternative medication(s) or may taper me off all medication(s).** I will not hold my physician liable for problems caused by the discontinuance of medication(s).
- I **agree to submit to urine and/or blood screens** to detect the use of non-prescribed and prescribed medication(s) at any time and without prior warning. If I test positive for illegal substance(s), such as marijuana, speed, cocaine, etc., treatment for chronic pain may be terminated. Also, a consult with, or referral to, an expert may be necessary: such as submitting to a psychiatric or psychological evaluation by a qualified physician such as an addictionologist or a physician who specializes in detoxification and rehabilitation and/or cognitive behavioral therapy/psychotherapy.
- I recognize that my chronic pain represents a complex problem which may benefit from physical therapy, psychotherapy, alternative medical care, etc. I also recognize **that my active participation** in the management of my pain is extremely important. I agree to **actively participate in all aspects of the pain management program** recommended by my physician to achieve increased function and improved quality of life.
- I agree that I **shall inform any doctor** who may treat me for any other medical problem(s) that I am enrolled in a pain management program, since the use of other medication(s) may cause harm.

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- I hereby give my physician **permission** to discuss all diagnostic and treatment details with my other physician(s) and pharmacist(s) regarding my use of medications prescribed by my other physician(s).
- I must take the medication(s) as instructed by my physician. **Any unauthorized increase** in the dose of medication(s) may be viewed as a cause for discontinuation of the treatment.
- I must **keep all follow-up appointments** as recommended by my physician or my treatment may be discontinued.

I certify and agree to the following:

- 1) I am **not currently using illegal drugs or abusing prescription medication(s)** and I am not undergoing treatment for substance dependence (addiction) or abuse. I am reading and making this agreement while in full possession of my faculties and not under the influence of any substance that might impair my judgment.
- 2) I have **never been involved** in the sale, illegal possession, misuse/diversion or transport of controlled substance(s) (narcotics, sleeping pills, nerve pills, or painkillers) or illegal substances (marijuana, cocaine, heroin, etc.)
- 3) **No guarantee or assurance has been made** as to the results that may be obtained from chronic pain treatment. With full knowledge of the potential benefits and possible risks involved, I consent to chronic pain treatment, since I realize that it provides me an opportunity to lead a more productive and active life.
- 4) I have reviewed the side effects of the medication(s) that may be used in the treatment of my chronic pain. **I fully understand the explanations regarding the benefits and the risks of these medication(s) and I agree to the use of these medication(s) in the treatment of my chronic pain.**

Patient Signature

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Name and contact information for pharmacy