



CHECKLIST

Are you a carer for someone living with pain? Do you want to learn more about their opioid pain medication?

Questions to ask the doctor or pharmacist

If you're a carer for someone living with pain or someone who takes pain medication, it's important to find out if their medicines contain opioids. Opioids are powerful medicines. Strong and effective when used as directed by the doctor ([see Factsheet 1](#)). But, they can

come with a risk of harm including side-effects or even dependence (see [Factsheet 2](#)).

The doctor or pharmacist should be happy to answer any questions you may have about opioids. Below are some suggestions to help you during these conversations. Feel free to add more if you or the person you care for have other questions.

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	Question	Follow Up Questions	Notes
1	The person I'm a carer for takes strong pain medication – is it an opioid?	Are there other medicines that should NOT be taken while using the opioid? (including over-the-counter medicines)	
2	How can I support the person I'm caring for to take their opioid medicines safely?	How much of the medicine should they take and in what form? How often do they need to take the medication? How long should they take it for?	
3	What are the potential side effects or danger signs of taking opioids?	What should I do if the person I'm caring for experiences side effects or I see danger signs?	
4	How do I talk to the person I'm caring for about the risks or concerns I might have about their medication?	I'm worried the person I'm caring for is not taking opioids correctly. How can I talk to them about this or is there someone who can help?	
5	Where can I find more information about opioid medicines?	Is there an information leaflet available?	
6	Are there other medicine options to reduce pain that don't contain opioids?	Are there non-medication options, e.g. lifestyle changes, massage etc	
7	What could happen if the person I'm caring for suddenly stops taking their opioids?	When should they stop their opioid medication?	
8	Is there anyone who can offer me any advice or support to look after myself while caring for someone living with pain or using pain medications?	How do I manage my own wellbeing?	

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Factsheets available from Carers Australia:

- [Factsheet 1: How do I know if the person I'm caring for is taking opioid medicines?](#)
- [Factsheet 2: How can I support the person I'm caring for take their opioid medicines?](#)
- [Factsheet 3: What can I do if the person I'm caring for is not using their opioid medicines safely?](#)
- [Factsheet 4: Will the person I'm caring for still have access to opioid medicines?](#)
- [Factsheet 5: How can I help someone living with pain?](#)

The above factsheets can be found at

<https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/opioids-information/caring-for-someone-living-with-pain>.

More resources that may help carers of people taking pain medicines can be found on these websites:

- **Carer Gateway at**
<https://www.carergateway.gov.au/help-advice/working-health-services>
- **Carer Help**
 - **Question Prompt List at**
[https://www.carerhelp.com.au/Portals/16/Documents/Carersheet/Question prompt list.pdf](https://www.carerhelp.com.au/Portals/16/Documents/Carersheet/Question%20prompt%20list.pdf)
 - **Handling Medications at**
[https://www.carerhelp.com.au/Portals/16/Documents/Carersheet/Medication template%26 handling medications.pdf](https://www.carerhelp.com.au/Portals/16/Documents/Carersheet/Medication%20template%26handling%20medications.pdf)
- **NPS MedicineWise at**
<https://www.nps.org.au/>
- **Pain Australia at**
<https://www.painaustralia.org.au/>
- **National Pain Week at**
<http://www.nationalpainweek.org.au/>
- **Australian Pain Management Association at**
<https://www.painmanagement.org.au/>
- **Chronic Pain Australia at**
<http://chronicpinaustralia.org.au/index.php>
- **Palliative Care Australia (Questions PDF) at**
https://palliativecare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PCA002_Asking-Questions-Can-Help_FA.pdf
- **HealthDirect (Question Builder) at**
<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/question-builder>
- **Think Patient Think Carer (NSW Health PDF) at**
[https://www.nslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/carers/documents/NS11895-E GP Guide - Think Patient - Think Carer.pdf](https://www.nslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/carers/documents/NS11895-E_GP_Guide_-_Think_Patient_-_Think_Carer.pdf)