



# Opioid Wisely

Communications Toolkit

Choosing  
Wisely  
Canada

<b>3</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>4</b>	<b>ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>5</b>	<b>NEWS RELEASE</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>7</b>	<b>OPIOID RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>8</b>	<b>KEY MESSAGES</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>9</b>	<b>FAQ</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>10</b>	<b>EMAIL TEMPLATE</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>11</b>	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>14</b>	<b>POSTER AND PATIENT ASSETS</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>

# Contact

**For media inquiries related to the Opioid Wisely campaign, please contact:**

 info@choosingwiselycanada.org

 Stephanie Callan  
Communications Coordinator  
416-864-6060 ext. 77560

**For general inquiries, please contact us or visit our website for more information:**

 info@choosingwiselycanada.org

 www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely

# About the Campaign

The opioid crisis is having devastating consequences for individuals, families, and communities across Canada. It is a complex health and social issue, and there are no simple solutions.

In response, Choosing Wisely Canada has launched Opioid Wisely, a campaign that encourages thoughtful conversation between clinicians and patients to reduce harms associated with opioid prescribing.

The Opioid Wisely campaign will launch on March 1, 2018 with the support of over 30 organizations representing doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, other health professionals, as well as patients and their families. Central to the campaign is a set of 14 specialty-specific recommendations for when the use of opioids should not be first line therapy. These recommendations cover 11 different clinical specialties. More recommendations, covering other specialties, will be released over the coming months.

The Opioid Wisely campaign also includes information resources to help patients have informed conversations with their clinicians about safe options for managing pain.

The Opioid Wisely campaign was initiated at the encouragement of the [Pan-Canadian Collaborative on Education for Improved Opioid Prescribing](#).

## Participating Organizations

Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	Canadian Chiropractic Association	Canadian Society of Internal Medicine*
Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry	Canadian Deprescribing Network	Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada*
Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine*	Canadian Headache Society*	Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians
Canadian Anesthesiologists Society	Canadian IBD Network of Research and Growth in Quality Improvement*	Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists
Canadian Association of Advanced Practice Nurses	Canadian Medical Association	Canadian Spine Society*
Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians	Canadian Nurses Association	College of Family Physicians of Canada*
Canadian Association of Hospital Dentists*	Canadian Pain Society	Families for Addiction Recovery
Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists	Canadian Pharmacists Association*	Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada
Canadian Association of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation*	Canadian Physiotherapy Association	Occupational Medicine Specialists of Canada*
Canadian Association of Poison Control Centres	Canadian Psychiatric Association	Pan-Canadian Collaborative on Education for Improved Opioid Prescribing
	Canadian Society of Clinical Chemists	

\*One of the 11 organizations that have released opioid-related recommendations as of March 1, 2018.

# News Release

## Choosing Wisely Canada Launches “Opioid Wisely”

**Ottawa – March 1, 2018** Choosing Wisely Canada is launching a new campaign today to raise awareness around the importance of clinician-patient conversations to reduce harms associated with opioid prescribing. The Opioid Wisely campaign is supported by over 30 organizations representing doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, other health professionals, as well as patients and their families.

Central to the campaign is a set of 14 specialty-specific recommendations for when the use of opioids should not be first line therapy. For example, the College of Family Physicians of Canada says that patients should not continue on opioids beyond the immediate period after surgery. This period is typically three days or less, and rarely more than seven days.

“We are seeing devastating consequences for individuals, families and communities as a result of the opioid crisis,” says Wendy Levinson, Chair of Choosing Wisely Canada. “It is a complex health and social issue, with no simple solution. Avoiding opioids in circumstances where safer treatment options are available is certainly part of the solution.”

“Family doctors see firsthand the impact of opioids on their patients including side effects, addiction, overdose, and death,” says Dr. Jeff Sisler, Executive Director, Professional Development and Practice Support with the College of Family Physicians of Canada. “We are pleased to support the Opioid Wisely recommendations that encourage more discussion between patients and their health care providers to explore other options for pain management.”

“As providers of care, we want to have a key role in ensuring the evidence-based use of these medications to keep Canadians safe,” says Dr. Laurent Marcoux, President of the Canadian Medical Association. “The more information patients and prescribers have, we believe the better the outcome will be.”

To learn more about the Opioid Wisely campaign, and to view the complete set of recommendations and patient materials, visit [www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/opioid-wisely](http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/opioid-wisely). Additional recommendations will be released in the near future.

Opioid Wisely is an initiative of Choosing Wisely Canada, a national campaign to help clinicians and patients engage in conversations about unnecessary tests and treatments, and make smart and effective care choices. Choosing Wisely Canada is organized by the University of Toronto, Canadian Medical Association and St. Michael’s Hospital.

Organizations currently participating in the Opioid Wisely campaign:

- Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry
- Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine\*
- Canadian Anesthesiologists Society

- Canadian Association of Advanced Practice Nurses
- Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians
- Canadian Association of Hospital Dentists\*
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
- Canadian Association of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation\*
- Canadian Association of Poison Control Centres
- Canadian Chiropractic Association
- Canadian Deprescribing Network
- Canadian Headache Society\*
- Canadian IBD Network of Research and Growth in Quality Improvement\*
- Canadian Medical Association
- Canadian Nurses Association
- Canadian Pain Society
- Canadian Pharmacists Association\*
- Canadian Physiotherapy Association
- Canadian Psychiatric Association
- Canadian Society of Clinical Chemists
- Canadian Society of Internal Medicine\*
- Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada\*
- Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians
- Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists
- Canadian Spine Society\*
- College of Family Physicians of Canada\*
- Families for Addiction Recovery
- Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada
- Occupational Medicine Specialists of Canada\*
- Pan-Canadian Collaborative on Education for Improved Opioid Prescribing

\*One of the 11 organizations that have released opioid-related recommendations, as of March 1, 2018.

### **About Choosing Wisely Canada**

Choosing Wisely Canada is a national campaign to help clinicians and patients engage in conversations about unnecessary tests and treatments, and make smart and effective care choices. Choosing Wisely Canada launched on April 2, 2014, and is organized by the University of Toronto, Canadian Medical Association and St. Michael's Hospital (Toronto).

SOURCE: Choosing Wisely Canada

For further information:

Stephanie Callan

Communications Coordinator

[steph@choosingwiselycanada.org](mailto:steph@choosingwiselycanada.org)

416-864-6060 x77560

# Opioid Recommendations

Specialty Society	Recommendation
Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine	Don't prescribe opiates as first line treatment for tendinopathies.
Canadian Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	Don't order prescription drugs for pain without considering functional improvement.
Canadian Association of Hospital Dentists	Don't use opioids for post-operative dental pain until optimized dose of NSAID/Acetaminophen has been used.
Canadian Headache Society	Don't prescribe opioid analgesics or combination analgesics containing opioids or barbiturates as first line therapy for the treatment of migraine.
Canadian Pharmacists Association	Don't recommend the use of over-the-counter medications containing codeine for the management of acute or chronic pain. Counsel patients against their use and recommend safe alternatives.
Canadian Society of Internal Medicine	Don't initiate therapy with opioids for patients with chronic non-cancer pain unless non-opioid pharmacotherapy and other non-pharmacological options have been optimized.
Canadian Spine Society	Don't use an opioid analgesic medication as first-line treatment for acute, uncomplicated, mechanical, back-dominant pain.
	Don't treat post-operative back pain with opioid analgesic medication unless it is functionally directed and strictly time limited.
	Don't use opioid analgesic medication in the ongoing treatment of chronic, non-malignant back pain.
College of Family Physicians of Canada	Don't continue opioid analgesia beyond the immediate postoperative period or other episode of acute, severe pain.
	Don't initiate opioids long-term for chronic pain until there has been a trial of available non-pharmacological treatments and adequate trials of non-opioid medications.
Gastroenterology: Inflammatory Bowel Disease	Don't use opioids long-term to manage abdominal pain in inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).
Occupational Medicine Specialists of Canada	Don't prescribe opiates for the treatment of acute or chronic non-cancer pain without first assessing side effects, work status, and capacity to drive a motor vehicle.
Society of Obstetricians and Cynaecologists of Canada	Don't use meperidine for labour analgesia due to its long-acting active metabolites and negative effects on neonatal behaviours.

# Key Messages

The opioid crisis is having devastating consequences for individuals, families, and communities across Canada. It is a complex health and social issue, and there are no simple solutions.

Professional organizations representing doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, other health professionals, as well as patients and their families would like to be part of the solution.

Choosing Wisely Canada has collaborated with over 30 participating organizations to launch Opioid Wisely on March 1, 2018.

Choosing Wisely Canada has launched Opioid Wisely, a campaign that encourages thoughtful conversation between clinicians and patients to reduce harms associated with opioid prescribing.

As part of the Opioid Wisely campaign, participating organizations have identified evidence-based clinical scenarios that show when an opioid prescription may not be warranted, and may do more harm than good.

**For example:**

**College of Family Physicians of Canada**

Don't initiate opioids long-term for chronic pain until there has been a trial of available non-pharmacological treatments and adequate trials of non-opioid medications.

**Canadian Spine Society**

Don't use an opioid analgesic medication as first-line treatment for acute, uncomplicated, mechanical, back-dominant pain.

Central to the campaign is a set of 14 specialty-specific recommendations for when the use of opioids should not be first line therapy. These recommendations cover 11 different clinical specialties. More recommendations, covering other specialties, will be released over the coming months.

The campaign also works with patients and their families to develop information resources that help both patient and prescriber make informed choices for pain management.

Opioid Wisely is an initiative of Choosing Wisely Canada, a national campaign to help clinicians and patients engage in conversations about unnecessary tests and treatments, and make smart and effective care choices. Choosing Wisely Canada is organized by the University of Toronto, Canadian Medical Association and St. Michael's Hospital.

# FAQ

## **What is the goal of the Opioid Wisely campaign?**

- The goal of the Opioid Wisely campaign is to help reduce harms associated with opioid prescribing
- It does this by encouraging clinician-patient conversations about different options for managing pain, including non-opioid and non-drug alternatives before considering an opioid prescription

## **Who is behind the Opioid Wisely campaign?**

- The Opioid Wisely campaign is supported by more than 30 organizations representing doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, other health professionals, as well as patients and their families, among others
- The campaign is organized by Choosing Wisely Canada
- Choosing Wisely Canada initiated the campaign at the request of the Pan-Canadian Collaborative on Education for Improved Opioid Prescribing, which is a component of Health Canada's 2016 Joint Statement of Action to Address the Opioid Crisis

## **Who is Choosing Wisely Canada?**

- Choosing Wisely Canada is a national campaign to help clinicians and patients engage in conversations about unnecessary tests and treatments, and make smart and effective care choices
- Choosing Wisely Canada was founded in 2014, and is organized by the University of Toronto, Canadian Medical Association and St. Michael's Hospital (Toronto)

## **How have patients been involved?**

- Patient organizations are part of the Opioid Wisely Working Group that assembled, reviewed and endorsed the opioid recommendations and patient materials
- Choosing Wisely Canada has patient representatives of its own who have been involved in reviewing campaign materials
- Patient organizations interested in joining the campaign can contact Choosing Wisely Canada

## **Has the pharmaceutical industry been involved?**

- No
- Choosing Wisely Canada does not accept financial support from pharmaceutical companies, nor does it collaborate with pharmaceutical companies in any way

## **The recommendations all start with “don’t”. Are you denying patients of medications they need to manage their pain?**

- No
- The campaign encourages clinicians and patients to have a conversation about what's best for each individual patient and their condition, and to think about the risks and benefits of the different options
- The recommendations represent specific clinical scenarios where, based on scientific evidence, opioids can do more harm than good

# Email Template

Below is a template email to send out to members of your community.

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Dear \_\_\_\_\_ Membership,

The opioid crisis is having devastating consequences for individuals, families and communities across Canada.

[insert organizational name] is a proud supporter of the new Opioid Wisely campaign. The campaign is organized by Choosing Wisely Canada and supported by over 30 organizations representing doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, other health professionals, as well as patients and their families.

The goal of Opioid Wisely is to raise awareness around the importance of clinician-patient conversations to reduce harms associated with opioid prescribing. Central to the campaign is a set of 14 specialty-specific recommendations for when opioids should not be first line therapy, along with a suite of patient resources. The campaign is expected build over the coming months, with the rolling release of new recommendations from other specialties, and additional resources for patients.

You can access all of the materials at: [www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely](http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely)

**[for the 11 organizations with Choosing Wisely Canada recommendations related to opioids, consider adding the following:**

**In particular, we would like to draw your attention to the opioid recommendations developed by our own organization:**

**(insert recommendation in bold text)]**

We encourage you to visit the website and to use these materials and apply the Opioid Wisely approach in your daily practice or work.

Regards,  
[name]

# Social Media - Twitter

Below, we have provided sample social media posts that you can copy or adapt for your own pages. Social media assets to accompany provided tweets are also available for download.

For all campaign related social media posts, please use the hashtag **#OpioidWisely**.

Tweet	Graphic
<p>Today, @ChooseWiselyCA @CMA_Docs &amp; @FamPhysCan are excited to announce the launch of a new campaign - Opioid Wisely: A national campaign to help reduce the harms associated with #opioid prescribing <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>
<p>#OpioidWisely encourages thoughtful conversation between clinicians &amp; patients to reduce harms associated with #opioid #prescribing. Learn more: <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>
<p>Over 30 participating organizations have come together to reduce the harms associated with #opioid prescribing. See how you can encourage conversations about safer options for pain management. #OpioidWisely <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>
<p>11 specialty societies developed a total of 14 recommendations where evidence shows that an #opioid prescription is not necessary &amp; may cause harm. See the full list: <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a> #OpioidWisely</p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>
<p>There are many ways to manage pain. Talk to your doctor about the harms associated with #opioid prescribing &amp; safer options available. #OpioidWisely <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Doors Graphic</a>
<p>#OpioidWisely recs encourage more discussion between patients &amp; their health care providers to explore other options for pain management - see the full list: <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Webpage</a>
<p>#OpioidWisely offers resources for clinicians and patients to stimulate the conversation on #opioid prescribing. Download the new poster or patient pamphlet to learn more: <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Doors Graphic</a>
<p>New patient pamphlet on #opioids now available! Check out the new resource &amp; have a conversation with patients on opioids &amp; pain management: <a href="http://www.choosingwiselycanada.org/patient-pamphlet-opioids">www.choosingwiselycanada.org/patient-pamphlet-opioids</a> #OpioidWisely</p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>

If you would like to receive social media posts for recommendations related to your specialty, please email: [info@choosingwiselycanada.org](mailto:info@choosingwiselycanada.org).

# Social Media - Facebook

Below, we have provided sample social media posts that you can copy or adapt for your own pages. Social media assets to accompany provided tweets are also available for download.

For all campaign related social media posts, please use the hashtag **#OpioidWisely**.

Post	Graphic
<p>Today, Choosing Wisely Canada, the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian College of Family Physicians of Canada are excited to announce the launch of a new campaign - Opioid Wisely: A national campaign to help reduce the harms associated with #opioid prescribing. <a href="#">#OpioidWisely</a> <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>
<p><b>f</b> <a href="#">#OpioidWisely</a> encourages thoughtful conversation between clinicians &amp; patients to reduce harms associated with #opioid #prescribing. Learn more: <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>
<p><b>f</b> Over 30 participating organizations have come together to reduce the harms associated with #opioid prescribing. See how you can encourage conversations about safer options for pain management. <a href="#">#OpioidWisely</a> <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>
<p><b>f</b> 11 professional organizations have developed a total of 14 recommendations where evidence shows that an #opioid prescription is not necessary and may cause harm. See the full list: <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">#OpioidWisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>
<p><b>f</b> There are many ways to manage pain. Talk to your doctor about the harms associated with #opioid prescribing and safer options available. <a href="#">#OpioidWisely</a> <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Doors Graphic</a>
<p><b>f</b> <a href="#">#OpioidWisely</a> recommendations encourage more discussion between patients &amp; their health care providers to explore other options for pain management - See the full list: <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Webpage</a>
<p><b>f</b> <a href="#">#OpioidWisely</a> offers resources for clinicians and patients to stimulate the conversation on #opioid prescribing. Download the new poster or patient pamphlet to learn more: <a href="http://www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely">www.ChoosingWiselyCanada.org/Opioid-Wisely</a></p>	<a href="#">Doors Graphic</a>
<p><b>f</b> Our new patient pamphlet on opioids is now available! Use our resources to have a conversation with patients on opioids &amp; pain management - learn more: <a href="http://www.choosingwiselycanada.org/patient-pamphlets/opioids">www.choosingwiselycanada.org/patient-pamphlets/opioids</a></p>	<a href="#">Hand Graphic</a>

If you would like to receive social media posts for recommendations related to your specialty, please email: [info@choosingwiselycanada.org](mailto:info@choosingwiselycanada.org).

# Social Media - Graphics

Use the following graphics on social media with the hashtag **#OpioidWisely**

 Twitter:



[Download here](#)



[Download here](#)

 Facebook:



[Download here](#)

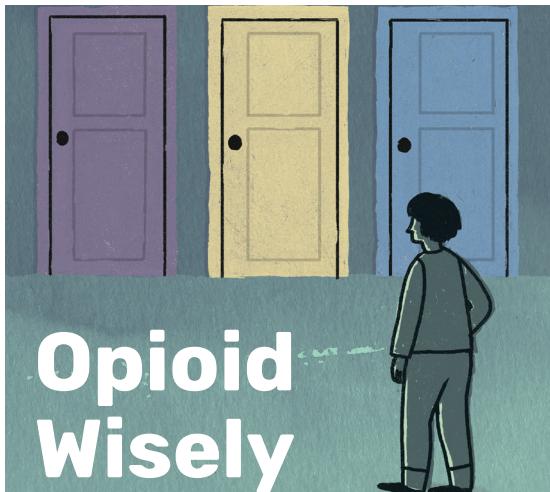


[Download here](#)

# Poster and Patient Pamphlet

Download or print the following resources to help stimulate the conversation on appropriate opioid prescribing.

## Opioid Wisely Poster



[Download here](#)

## Opioid Patient Pamphlet

The pamphlet cover features a hand icon and the text "Choosing Wisely Canada".

**Opioids:**  
When you need them - and when you don't.

If you just had surgery or are experiencing a health problem, pain is a natural and expected part of the process. Pain medicines may help you function better and cope with the amount of pain you are experiencing, but will not eliminate it entirely.

Opioids are common pain medicines. They can help if you have bad short-term pain — like pain after surgery for a broken bone. They can also help you manage pain if you have an illness like cancer.

But opioids are strong drugs. And usually they are not the best way to treat long-term pain, such as arthritis, low back pain, or frequent headaches. This kind of pain is called "chronic" pain. Before getting opioids for these problems, you should discuss other options with your health care provider. Here's why:

**Opioids have serious side effects and risks.**

Over time, the body gets used to opioids and they stop working as well. To get the same relief, you need to take more and more. This is called "tolerance." Higher doses can cause serious side effects:

[Download here](#)

## ISMP Canada Opioid Handout



### Opioids for pain after surgery: Your questions answered

#### 1. Changes?



##### You have been prescribed an opioid.

Opioids reduce pain but will not take away all your pain. Ask your prescriber about other methods of reducing pain including using ice, stretching, physiotherapy, or non-opioid drugs like acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Know your pain control plan and work closely with your prescriber if your pain does not improve.

#### 2. Continue?



##### Opioids are usually required for less than 1-2 weeks after surgery.

As you continue to recover from your surgery, your pain should get better day by day. As you get better, you will need less opioids. Consult your doctor or pharmacist about how and when to reduce your dose.

#### 3. Proper Use?



##### Use the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time.

Overdose and addiction can occur with opioids. Avoid alcohol and sleeping pills (e.g. benzodiazepines like lorazepam) while taking opioids. Do not drive while taking opioids.

[Download here](#)

