Prescriptions from a health care professional are the most common source of opioids for adolescents who misuse them.

A significant proportion, 3.1%, of adolescents with access to opioids misuse them.

Many adolescents who misuse prescription opioids, 13.9% will develop dependence/opioid use disorder.

Adolescent opioid misuse is associated with heroin use.

A significant proportion, 94%, of adolescents prescribed opioids divert them.

Adolescents who receive an opioid prescription after surgery may have a higher likelihood of future opioid prescriptions within the following year.

The optimal postoperative regimen should balance adequate pain relief for recovery while minimizing adverse effects.

We Recommend...

08...non-opioid option(s) as first-line treatment when discharge analgesics are deemed necessary.

09...perioperative intravenous non-opioid medications as part of an opioid-sparing regimen.

10...the targeted use of perioperative regional or neuraxial anesthesia techniques as part of an opioid-sparing regimen. Effective communication between surgeons and anesthesiologists will ensure appropriate patient selection.

11...the US Food and Drug Administration guidelines regarding the limited use of codeine and tramadol for children younger than 18.

12...that caregivers and children are educated about pain management expectations and methods before the day of surgery and, again, preoperatively.

13...consistent pain management messaging from all members of the perioperative care team.

14...that pain management education is tailored to the caregiver’s and child’s needs to promote shared understanding and expectations.

15...that perioperative education include instruction on possible adverse drug events, the seriousness of adverse drug events, and what to do if those occur, if opioids are prescribed.

16...educating caregivers and older children to store opioids securely and properly dispose of unused medication.

17...healthcare entities caring for pediatric patients consider providing infrastructure and means for safe opioid disposal.

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