



**Safe
Prescribing
Initiative**

HANLEY FOUNDATION



The Art of Opioid Prescribing in Children and Adolescents: *A Prescribers' Guide*

01

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

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

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

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Adolescent opioid misuse is associated with heroin use.

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

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

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

We Recommend...

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

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

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...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.

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

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

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

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

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...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.

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

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



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