

New Mexico Medical Controlled Substance and Pain Management Policy for Patients

This policy has been created to ensure the safety of patients who are managing their chronic pain or other conditions (conditions lasting longer than 2 weeks) with controlled substances. New Mexico Medical may update this policy at any time.

Every patient requiring chronic pain management will need a pain management contract with his or her primary care provider.

Patients must arrive on time for a visit scheduled for pain management. Patients arriving late may be rescheduled.

Patients are not allowed same-day visits for chronic pain management. Visits must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance so providers and staff may plan ahead for the visit.

Patients will not be given a refill on controlled substances for pain management during a walk-in visit.

Patients may have to wait 24-48 hours to obtain a prescription for controlled substances after a visit if a provider requires more time to review your records.

Lost or stolen prescriptions will not be replaced by a new prescription.

Patients must have objective findings to receive controlled substances for pain management. Examples of objective findings include x-rays showing an injury or abnormality on physical exam findings. If your x-rays are more than one year old, or as determined by your provider from time to time, your provider may order new x-rays or other diagnostic tests to assess your current health.

Patients seeing a provider for pain management for the first time will not receive a controlled substance prescription at the initial visit for pain consultation. A provider must have the opportunity to review health records related to chronic pain before creating a pain management plan that may or may not include controlled substances. Your provider

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may ask that you return to the clinic for a second or third visit before instituting a pain management plan.

Patients requiring high levels of narcotic pain medication will need to see a pain specialist to consult on the pain management plan. It is possible that your provider will refer you to a pain management specialist for complete pain management.

Providers may discontinue the use of controlled substances at any time if it is deemed that the patient or community may be at risk for adverse outcomes.

Providers may request that patients present to the clinic within 24 hours for a pill count or urine drug screen. If you are out of town, your provider may ask that you go to a laboratory near you to perform urine drug screening.

If patients wish to change providers within New Mexico Medical for chronic pain management (i.e. you are changing locations from Moriarty to Edgewood because you are moving to a new house), both providers must agree that this is an appropriate change and you will be asked to begin a new pain contract with your new primary care provider. If both providers do not agree that this is an appropriate change, you will be asked to continue pain management with your current provider.

Tips for Successful Chronic Pain Management

Keep a copy of all of your records pertaining to any conditions causing chronic pain.

Take your medications as prescribed. Your provider has created a plan for your pain management on a specific schedule. Deviating from this schedule can lead to ineffective pain control. If your pain is not well controlled on your current pain management plan, please notify your provider as soon as you are aware that your pain is not well controlled. Your provider may elect to change your pain management plan or refer you to a pain specialist for pain management.

Schedule your next chronic pain management visit before you leave the clinic. Scheduling ahead of time ensures that you are able to see your provider in a timely manner. If you need to reschedule, please do so 24 hours in advance.

Talk to your provider about what helps your pain in addition to medications.

If you are concerned that you are becoming dependent upon or addicted to pain medications, do not hesitate to schedule a visit with your provider to talk about this.

Treat your pain medications as if they were your wallet or other valuable item. Some patients elect to keep their medications locked in a medicine cabinet to keep them away from children or other family members. Other patients only take one or two doses of medication out of the house for the day so they do not risk having their medication become lost or stolen. Always keep paper prescriptions in a safe place and talk to your pharmacist about when you are eligible for a refill on your medications.

If your provider refers you to a specialist, such as an orthopedist or neurologist, schedule an appointment and be sure that you attend the appointment.

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Frequently Asked Questions about Chronic Pain Management with Controlled Substances

What if I cannot take over the counter pain medications like Tylenol?

An allergy or contraindication to medications like Tylenol or Ibuprofen does not mean that you will need controlled substances for pain management.

What is a controlled substance?

A controlled substance is a medication that is regulated by the government and has a potential for abuse that may lead to severe dependence on the medication. Common examples of controlled substances used for pain management are Percocet, oxycodone, tramadol, and lyrica. For a full list of controlled substances, please visit the US Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration website or ask your provider.

Do I have to see a provider every time I need a prescription for controlled substances for chronic pain?

Yes. Every prescription for a controlled substance for chronic pain requires a visit with a provider.

How often do I need to see a provider for chronic pain management?

Generally, patients must see a provider on a monthly basis for chronic pain management. Your provider may ask to see you sooner than one month to ensure your pain is being safely managed.

Why do I have to submit a urine drug screen?

Controlled substances have a high potential for abuse. Your provider must ensure they are screening all patients for signs of abuse, use of illicit substances, and diversion to keep all patients and the community safe.

What if I cannot submit a urine drug screen?

You may be given a referral to go to a lab for a blood test that screens for controlled substances, or your blood may be drawn at the time of your visit.

What do I do if the provider I have a pain contract with is out of the clinic during the week I am due for a pain management visit?

Your provider may arrange for you to see another provider in the clinic for pain management if they are out of the office for one week or more. If a provider knows in advance they will be away, they may have already scheduled a visit with you before they are out of the office. This will most likely be less than one month after your previous pain management visit.

What if I will run out of medications before I can get in to see my provider?

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Generally, we ask that you schedule a visit to see your provider before you run out of medications. Please ask to speak to your provider's medical assistant for further advice. If you have run out of your medication early for any reason, early refills will not be granted on controlled substances.

I have been referred to see a pain management specialist but cannot get an appointment right away, what should I do?

Continue to follow your provider's current pain management plan. If you feel that you need a change to this plan, please schedule an appointment to see your provider. Your provider may or may not recommend controlled substances to manage your pain before you can see a pain specialist.

Why is my provider asking that my pain be managed by a pain specialist rather than in this clinic?

Pain management requiring a complex plan or high levels of narcotic pain medication beyond the scope of New Mexico Medical may need to be performed by a specialist. You may still see your provider for other needs including primary care, illness, and acute injury.

Why does this clinic have so many rules about chronic pain management?

Chronic pain management with opiates can pose significant risk to the health of patients and the community. New Mexico Medical adheres to the laws, rules, and regulations regarding pain management to ensure that prescription narcotics do not harm patients and the community.

What do I do if I violate my pain management contract?

Your provider may refer you to a pain management specialist and/or counseling specialist. You will no longer be eligible for pain management with controlled substances at New Mexico Medical if your provider discontinues your pain management contract due to violations. You may still be eligible for pain management ***without*** controlled substances at New Mexico Medical following a violation of the contract, but this is at the discretion of your provider.

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