**NARCOTIC PRESCRIBING POLICY**

Thank you for choosing Eppel Family Medicine for your health care needs. It is our goal to provide the best possible care for our patients. In order to reach this goal, it is necessary to have rules established to eliminate those who procure narcotics for illegal purposes, or for substance abuse. We must also protect privileges of our practice to prescribe, obey the federal and state laws under which we operate, and maintain the health and welfare of the patients.

Our office policy on the use and prescription of narcotics is as follows:

Refills or new prescriptions for narcotics are only written during scheduled office visits. We cannot call in narcotic prescriptions during non-office hours. We do not fill prescriptions that were lost, stolen, spilled, flushed, eaten by a cat/dog, etc. – NO EXCEPTIONS. The responsibility for safekeeping of these medications lies solely with the patient.

* No narcotics will be prescribed for chronic pain outside of active cancer treatment, palliative care, and end-of-life care.
* Narcotics may be prescribed for acute injuries.
* Narcotics will only be prescribed for a period of two weeks following an acute injury/surgery. There are the occasional exceptions to the rule. In this case we will need to see you to reevaluate your condition prior to renewing your prescription.
* If you are currently on chronic narcotics, we can work with you to wean off the medication or refer you to a pain management clinic.

As part of keeping our patients informed, we want to make you aware of the reasons why we limit the use of narcotics.

* Severe postoperative/post injury pain that would require narcotics will usually reduce significantly by 2-3 days after surgery or injury and is gone by 10-14 days. Need for narcotics longer than this period may signal complications that need more direct or specific treatment instead of covering up the problem. Typically however, it is known that a longer need for narcotics more often than not means that you are up doing too much and “chasing” it with narcotics. Although you may desire to be active, it is possible to be too active after an injury. You need to listen to your body and respond to it. Overall, you will recover quicker reducing your activity so that your pain is controllable without the need for narcotics. After all, your goal is to make the best possible recovery you can.
* After 3-7 days your brain wants to and is supposed to kick in and manage the pain naturally. This is the best way to manage medium and long-term soreness and milder pain. Narcotics are known to block this normal process.
* Narcotics are proven to be habit forming. Dependency on pain medication can start in as little as 2 weeks after beginning their use. We cannot tolerate allowing this to happen.
* The Washington State Medical Society and The Drug Enforcement Administration track providers and their prescribing of narcotics.
* We do not deny that you often have pain; however, it is necessary to be aware of your own ability to tolerate pain. We have created this policy to assist in assuring our patients receive the best care possible and we appreciate your assistance in enforcing it.

We appreciate your trust in us, and thank you for the opportunity to serve your health care needs. If you have any questions regarding our office policy on the use of narcotics, feel free to contact us so we can discuss it. In addition if you feel you need help with long-term (chronic) pain control, we will be happy to refer you to a pain management specialist.

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Responsible Party Signature Date