



Pharmacist FAQ - Diagnosis Code & Acute Prescribing

Will pharmacists be required to enforce the acute pain prescribing limits?

No. The responsibility of adhering to the limits is the responsibility of the prescriber. Pharmacists should be aware that there are exceptions to the rules and therefore there is no expectation that pharmacists enforce the limits.

Can I dispense a prescription if it does not contain a diagnosis or procedure code?

Yes. While a pharmacist has the option to call a prescriber to obtain the code, paragraph (K) of rule 4729-5-30 does permit the processing of a prescription without the diagnosis code. Per rule 4729-37-04, if the code is not provided the pharmacy must indicate "NC" when reporting the diagnosis or procedure code to OARRS.

Can I dispense a prescription if it does not contain the days' supply (i.e. the prescription still indicates PRN or "as needed")?

Yes. While a pharmacist has the option to call a prescriber to obtain the days' supply, paragraph (K) of rule 4729-5-30 does permit the processing of a prescription without the prescriber indicating the days' supply of the prescription. In that specific instance, the pharmacy should follow the requirements in rule 4729-37-04 for reporting the days' supply.

Reminder: Limits on Prescription Opioids for Acute Pain

The Board has continued to receive calls from both prescribers and pharmacists about the new acute prescribing rules that went into effect in August 2017.

In general, the rules limit the prescribing of opioid analgesics for acute pain, as follows:

1. No more than seven days of opioids can be prescribed for adults.
2. No more than five days of opioids can be prescribed for minors and only after the written consent of the parent or guardian is obtained in accordance with ORC 3719.061.
3. Health care providers may prescribe opioids in excess of the day supply limits only if they provide a specific reason in the patient's medical record.
4. Except as provided for in the rules, the total morphine equivalent dose (MED) of a prescription for acute pain cannot exceed an average of 30 MED per day.
5. The new limits do not apply to opioids prescribed for cancer, palliative care, end-of-life/hospice care or medication-assisted treatment for addiction.
6. The rules apply to the first opioid analgesic prescription for the treatment of an episode of acute pain.
7. The rules do not apply to inpatient prescriptions.

Information for prescribers can be found [here](#).

Information for pharmacists can be found [here](#).
