

# **Pembroke Hospital**

  

## **Inpatient Adult Program Patient & Family Handbook**

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Pembroke Hospital  
199 Oak Street  
Pembroke, MA 02359  
781-829-7000



## **WELCOME**

Welcome to the Inpatient Adult Program at Pembroke Hospital. This handbook is written for you but is intended for your family as well. It describes guidelines and other information that will orient you to your unit's program. Please feel free to ask our staff for help in understanding this guide or any other aspect of your treatment. Patients and families are always encouraged to ask questions and give us feedback. We look forward to working with you.

Being in the hospital may be difficult for you. You may feel nervous, angry or depressed. These feelings can be expected. Our goal is to help you help yourself as quickly as possible. Your goal may be to feel better, to get along better with others, to change how you act, or to resolve a crisis situation. We can help you reach your goals by providing a safe, structured and consistent treatment program.

During your hospitalization, we will evaluate your needs, help you become more stabilized, and transition you to treatment in an outpatient setting. Our hope is that your stay will be a collaborative effort, *as your help and hard work are the keys to your success.*

Again, welcome to Pembroke Hospital.

## **Our Mission**

***“Listening deeply and understanding the story of our patients...  
Making a difference in the lives we touch.”***

## PEMBROKE HOSPITAL

### WE NEED YOUR HELP

#### *to Maintain a Therapeutic & Healing Environment*

based on collective cooperation, mutual respect, and shared trust

#### We ask that you are willing to:

1. be **kind and courteous** to your peers and staff
2. ensure that your active participation in treatment is your highest priority
3. be responsible for your actions
4. promote a clean and organized living space
5. in situations of conflict, engage in peaceful resolution
6. understand that your individual commitment to this process will greatly influence your and the collective group's success in treatment

#### Staff at Pembroke Hospital are committed to:

1. being **kind and courteous** to each other, patients, and their families
2. fostering your active participation in treatment
3. preserving a safe and secure environment
4. cultivating an atmosphere of growth and healing

#### How we can work together to maintain a therapeutic and healing environment:

- On admission we ask that you develop (with our help) an individualized plan called a "Personal De-escalation Plan". This plan identifies problem behaviors that may:
  - become troublesome during your stay, or
  - prevent you from reaching your treatment goals.
- This plan identifies your triggers and the circumstances when your problem behaviors are most likely to occur.
- Your plan will also indicate how we can be most helpful to you during these difficult periods.

*Our priority is maintaining a therapeutic and healing environment where each person contributes to and benefits from his or her hospital experience.*

## **YOUR TREATMENT TEAM**

A team of highly qualified professionals will be assigned to work with you. This includes a Psychiatrist (a medical doctor who specializes in psychiatry), a Case Manager, Nurses, Rehab Therapists and Mental Health Associates (“MHAs”). Your Treatment Team will help you in a number of ways and can answer questions you may have about your treatment.

You may write the names of your Doctor, Case Manager and other members of your Treatment Team below.

\_\_\_\_\_

Doctor

\_\_\_\_\_

Case Manager

\_\_\_\_\_

Other

## **YOUR TREATMENT PLAN**

### **General Information**

Your treatment begins with an assessment of the issues that brought you into the hospital. The assessment is done by all members of your Treatment Team including your psychiatrist, case manager, activities therapist, nurses and MHAs. Please try to answer their questions as honestly and as best as you can.

Following these assessments, your psychiatrist and other members of your Treatment Team will create your Treatment Plan with you and/or your family. This will happen within three days of your admission. Your Treatment Plan describes the issues that brought you into the hospital, the goals you need to work on to address these issues, and the ways these goals will be met. If you have questions about your Treatment Plan, you can ask any member of your Treatment Team.

### **Medications**

If you and your psychiatrist feel it is merited, you may receive medications during your hospitalization. Any medications ordered by your psychiatrist will be administered by a licensed nurse at scheduled times.

If you bring medications into the hospital with you, we will store them until you are discharged, send them home with a family member, or perhaps with an order from your doctor and approval from our pharmacy, continue their use during your stay. In some instances, your doctor will indicate upon your discharge that you will not be able to take home the medications you brought into the hospital and will discuss with you the reasons for that decision.

We encourage you to know the names, doses and target symptoms of the medications included in your Treatment Plan. If you have any questions, ask a nurse or your psychiatrist.

### **Discharge Planning**

Before you leave the hospital you will be involved in developing a written discharge plan. It will include your goals for after you leave the program, where you will live, any needs you may have, and any treatment or professional help you may need. With your permission or your guardian’s permission, this plan is shared with the professionals involved in your care outside of the hospital.

## ***RESPECT, KINDNESS and SAFETY:*** ***The Cornerstones of Our Program***

Our program is set up to provide a safe, structured and therapeutic environment where you can work on the issues that caused your admission. You are here to get better and we want you to get the most out of your stay. We ask that you make every effort to participate in groups, cooperate with your doctor and the staff, and to ask us for help when you need it.

- Please be generous with your consideration of others. People appreciate kindness when they are having a tough time in their lives.
- Please respect each other's privacy and property. Do not lend or borrow the property of others.
- Please respect everyone's personal space by not touching other patients or staff, either in affection or anger.
- Please help keep everyone safe by making no threats or performing any acts of self-injury, violence, physical aggression or destruction of property. Drinking alcohol or taking illegal drugs or medications not prescribed by your doctor is prohibited here.
- Please help us maintain an environment of respect through no swearing, fighting, yelling, teasing, racial slurs, or sexual gestures or comments.

## ***FAMILY INVOLVEMENT***

Your family and/or friends may be asked to be involved in your treatment. They may be involved in the assessment process, treatment planning, meetings, discharge planning and other activities. Meetings will occur as needed and will be scheduled during your stay at the hospital. They can include education about problems, treatment options, and how to prevent or handle future problems. Meetings are generally scheduled in advance to allow all Treatment Team members to attend.

## **EDUCATIONAL GROUPS**

Educational groups are held daily on your unit. These classes or groups consist of discussions on specific topics, or of exercises and assignments that are meant to help you work through issues.

***ATTENDING GROUPS IS THE KEY TO HELPING YOU GET BETTER. Even if you don't feel like going, please make the effort. You are here to work on issues: the best place to do that is in groups.***

A few of our many groups are described below:

**Community Meeting.** This is the first group of the day. In it you will be asked to set at least one goal for the day related to what you are working on while in the hospital. This group is also used to discuss and solve issues on the unit, review the unit guidelines and review the schedule for the day. You might also be asked to talk about how you're eating and/or sleeping.

**Activities Therapy.** Structured activity groups are held daily during the week by the Activities Therapy staff. These activities help you to problem solve, learn about and express yourself, reduce stress, and improve how you interact with others. You may participate in art or music activities, exercise, sports, games, relaxation training, and other activities. These groups last approximately 45 minutes and may be led by Mental Health Associates, Nurses, staff from the Activities Therapy Department, or other members of the Treatment Team. Depending on the needs of the community, the topics discussed in these groups may include:

*Sensory-Based Approaches:* This multisensory treatment approach is offered in both individual and group formats.

*Addiction Education:* This group teaches about drug classifications, effects of drugs and of addiction on the body, recovery, relapse prevention strategies and plans.

*Medication Education:* This group teaches about specific medications, the benefits and the side effects of medications, medication compliance, and treatment benefits.

*Cognitive Skills:* This group explains the important interaction between a person's view of themselves, others and the world, and the effect this has on their emotions, behaviors and physical state.

*Coping Skills:* These groups include the following: distress tolerance, emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, mindfulness and grounding techniques, stress reduction, and anger management.

**Wrap Up Group.** Wrap Up group is the last group of the day. During this group you will review your day in general and have the chance to specifically discuss how you did with your goal for the day. Wrap Up group is also a chance to state something positive that happened during your day.

***Information from groups is confidential and should not be discussed with your peers outside of the group.***

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Your room is a private space, whether it is a single or shared room.** Please do your best to keep your room clean. If you need assistance, staff will help you. Visits will take place on the unit in common areas. Food and beverages will be consumed on the unit in common areas.

**Confidentiality.** Pembroke Hospital follows all laws and regulations concerning confidentiality. You are asked not to talk about other patients or their issues except in treatment groups. Please respect other's privacy by not going into other patient's rooms, congregating by the phones or around other people's visits.

The only exception to the rule of confidentiality is when an issue of someone's safety is at hand. **Please tell a staff member if another patient tells you that they plan to hurt themselves or someone else, or if they plan to run away from the hospital.**

**Spiritual and Cultural Needs.** While at Pembroke Hospital, we will do our best to address your spiritual and cultural needs. Feel free to discuss these needs with your Treatment Team so that we can accommodate your requests.

### **Smoking.**

- Pembroke Hospital is a smoke-free facility. Tobacco use of any kind is not be permitted anywhere on the campus.
- Electronic cigarettes are not permitted.
- If you would like to try quitting during your stay here, we can provide Nicorette gum and/or a Nicoderm patch to help.
- Cessation resources will be offered to patients.

### **Personal Items.**

- We ask that items of value be sent home with family or friends whenever possible. In the event you are unable to send valuables home with family or friends, staff will provide a locked area to hold items of value until your discharge. However, the program cannot be responsible for valuables such as money or jewelry.
- We ask that some personal items be kept in your "cubbie", such as make-up or perfumes.
- We apologize, but certain items are not allowed on the units:
  - Items that could violate someone's confidentiality such as cell phones, IPODS with video cameras, pagers, cameras, laptops and DVD players.
  - Items considered unsafe such as razors, nail files, glass bottles, metal picture frames/ mirrors, anything that can burn or explode, anything with alcohol or staples.

### **Clothing**

- We encourage you to wear comfortable, appropriate clothing to activities. Casual clothes, socks, and shoes are appropriate for most activities.
- Hats and sunglasses may be worn outside only.
- Clothing that is discouraged:
  - Clothing with drug, alcohol, sexual, or gang related messages.
  - Clothing that is revealing.
  - Clothing with metal buckles, belts, attached straps or chains.

## **Hygiene**

- Good personal hygiene is critical to your health and well being. Taking the time to properly groom yourself will help you avoid illness as well as help you feel better. We encourage you to keep up with your hygiene daily.
- If you need hygiene items, please let the nursing staff know and we will provide them for you.
- If you need assistance with your hygiene, staff will help you.
- Because we encourage you to participate in groups, please shower outside of scheduled group times.

**Television.** Television is available in the day room, except during group times and after lights-out. As there is only one television, please be considerate of others.

**Mail.** You may send and receive mail during your stay. Incoming mail is distributed daily (except Sundays). Letters and packages are asked to be opened in front of staff to prevent the possibility of restricted items coming onto the unit. Outgoing mail is sent out daily.

**Food and Beverages.** Pembroke Hospital's menu provides well-balanced meals. Visitors may bring a small amount of food that can be stored for you in the unit's kitchen *as long as the food is in sealed, single serving packaging*, for example, lunch size bags of potato chips or single serving containers of yogurt. *Please note, that no peanut snacks are allowed on the unit at any time.*

Visitors may bring something for you to eat *during their visit* (such as a sandwich or salad). Uneaten portions of food or food not in single serving packaging cannot be left here due to infection control concerns. Storage space is limited and cooking is limited to microwave reheating.

Beverages brought onto the unit must be in unopened, unbreakable, factory sealed single serve containers and should not contain caffeine. Due to infection control concerns, unsealed beverages, such as those from a coffee shop or fast food restaurant, cannot be brought onto the units.

**Housekeeping.** The housekeeping department provides cleaning services to each unit 7 days a week. Pembroke Hospital does ask that you and your peers help clean up after yourselves by making your bed each morning, throwing away your trash, and picking up your clothing and other items. Laundry machines are provided on each floor to wash your clothes. Clean linen will be provided to change your sheets as needed. You may ask staff at any time for clean linens and for help with your laundry.

**Telephones.** Unit phones are shared by all patients on the unit. We ask that you try to limit all calls to 10 minutes so that everyone has a chance to use the phones. Hospital phones, which need to be available for hospital business, may be used to call someone to ask them to call you back on the unit phones.

Unit phones are available for incoming and outgoing calls from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm to insure all patients have an opportunity for uninterrupted sleep. If you need to make or receive a call between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am, the hospital phone is available for your use.

**Video & Audio Surveillance.** Video and audio surveillance are used in all common areas throughout the hospital for your safety and protection.

**Concerns.** If you have a concern which staff cannot resolve, you may contact the hospital's Human Rights Officer ("staff" includes your psychiatrist, your case manager, activities therapist, nurses and mental health associates). The name and phone number of the Human Rights Officer, as well as the contact information for legal advocates, is posted on every unit and is included in this handbook along with a copy of "Your Rights as a Patient at Pembroke Hospital".

**“Do Not Resuscitate” (“DNR”) orders**– Pembroke Hospital does not recognize “Do Not Resuscitate” (“DNR”) orders. All life-saving first aid will be implemented. Referral and advance life support transfer will be arranged to a nearby facility where necessary care and decision making can occur.

**Driving Directions to Pembroke Hospital, 199 Oak Street, Pembroke, MA 02359 (Tel: 781-829-7000)**

**From Boston**

- Take the Southeast Expressway to Route 3 South.
- From Route 3 South, take exit 12 (Route 139 Pembroke/Marshfield).
- At bottom of exit ramp, take a left onto Route 139.
- Take an immediate left off of Route 139 onto Oak Street.
- Follow Oak Street for approximately ½ mile. Hospital entrance is on the left, off Winter Street (Industrial Park, then bear right).

**From Cape Cod:**

- Take Route 3 North to exit 12 (Route 139 Pembroke/Marshfield).
- Turn right at bottom of exit ramp.
- Go under Route 3 and take 2nd left (Oak Street) after Route 3.
- Follow Oak Street for approximately ½ mile. Hospital entrance is on the left, off Winter Street.

**6 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FOR PATIENTS**

1. The right to humane psychological and physical environment.
2. The right to be visited and others daily and in private, as reasonable and safe to do so.
3. The right to receive or refuse visits and phone calls from attorney, legal advocate, physician, social worker, psychologists, or clergy.
4. The right to send and receive unopened, uncensored mail.
5. The right to reasonable access to a phone to make and receive confidential calls.
6. The right to a fresh air break daily, as reasonable and safe to do so.

**PEMBROKE HOSPITAL**

## VISITING HOURS AND GUIDELINES DURING COVID19

We are pleased to announce that patients are permitted to have visitors for thirty minutes on *Tuesdays, Thursdays* and *Saturdays*. Below are the visiting times for each unit:

UNIT	VISITING TIME
SOUTH 2	9:30 am - 10:00 am
EAST 1	10:45am –11:15am
WEST 2	2:00 pm – 2:30 pm
WEST 1	2:30 pm – 3:00 pm
EAST 2	3:15 pm – 3:45 pm
SOUTH 1	3:45 pm – 4:15 pm

### **Visitors must follow the guidelines below:**

- Visitors must arrive 20 minutes early to allow time for screening including a temperature at the front entrance.
- Visitors must show their ID upon entrance.
- Visitors are prohibited from waiting in the lobby, entering the units or using the restroom.
- Visitors must wear a mask when entering the facility.
- Visitors must sanitize their hands when entering the building.
- After being screened, visitors must wait in their car until the visit starts.
- Visitors under 18 are prohibited.
- Visitors are not permitted to bring any food or drinks.
- Visitors bringing in belongings for patients must leave them at the front entrance.
- Visitors must leave their purse, phones and other restricted items in their car.
- Visits for S1 will be held in the cafeteria or courtyard. .
- If visitors are not feeling well or have tested positive for COVID19, we ask they please refrain from visiting until they are feeling better.

***In order to keep patients, visitors and staff safe during this time, we must strictly adhere to these guidelines.  
Thank you for your cooperation.***

**YOUR RIGHTS AS A PATIENT AT PEMBROKE HOSPITAL  
YOUR LEGAL STATUS AS A PATIENT**

**VOLUNTARY HOSPITALIZATION:** If you sign in on a Conditional Voluntary basis and you wish to leave, you must notify the hospital in writing. The hospital then has three business days in which to discharge you or petition the district court for your civil commitment.

**THREE DAY INVOLUNTARY UNDER S. 12 (B):** Before being admitted for a three day involuntary hospitalization, you must be given the opportunity to choose conditional voluntary status. The involuntary hospitalization expires after three business days unless the hospital petitions the district court for your commitment. A hearing will be conducted within five business days following the hospital's petition to the court.

If you have been involuntarily hospitalized under S. 12 (B), at your request, the hospital is required to contact the Committee for Public Counsel Services and a lawyer will be appointed to meet with you.

If you have been involuntarily hospitalized under S. 12 (B) and you have reason to believe that the admission is the result of an abuse or misuse of the S. 12 (B) admission process, you may request that an emergency hearing be held within 24 hours. The hospital will provide you or your attorney with a form to use for your request for a hearing.

**COURT COMMITMENT:** If the hospital petitions the court for your commitment, you may be required to stay at the hospital until a judge makes a decision to commit or discharge you. The court will appoint an attorney if you cannot afford one.

**RIGHT TO APPEAL YOUR COMMITMENT:** If the judge has ordered you to be involuntarily committed to this hospital and you believe you should no longer be retained here, you have the right to appeal the commitment. If you would like to appeal or have questions about your legal status, you may contact the hospital's Human Rights Officer, a legal advocate, or your attorney as discussed at the end of this notice.

### **DAILY LIVING**

**VISITS AND TELEPHONE:** You have the right to receive visitors of your own choosing daily and in private at reasonable times. You also have the right to reasonable access to the telephone to make and receive confidential phone calls, unless the call violates a criminal law or would unreasonably infringe on other persons use of the telephone.

**WHEN VISITS OR TELEPHONE USE MAY BE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED:** Your right to visit or talk by phone with your attorney or legal advocate, physician, psychologist, clergy or social worker at any reasonable time may not be restricted. Visits or telephone calls with others may be temporarily suspended if a visit or call in the immediate future would present a substantial risk of serious harm (based on your history of visits or calls) and there is no other, less restrictive way of preventing the harm. The restriction may not last longer than is necessary to prevent the harm and must be documented with specific facts in your record.

**MAIL:** You have the right to send and receive mail sealed, unopened, uncensored mail. However, for good cause, your mail may be opened and inspected in front of you, without it being read by staff, for the sole purpose of preventing contraband coming into the hospital. You have the right to be provided with stationary and postage in reasonable amounts.

**PERSONAL POSSESSIONS AND SEARCHES:** You have the right to wear your own clothes, to keep personal items including certain toilet articles as safety permits. You have the right to an individual storage place and to keep and spend a small amount of money. You have the right not to have unreasonable searches of yourself and your possessions.

**RELIGION:** You have the right to exercise your religious beliefs.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT:** You have the right to a humane psychological and physical environment. You must be provided living quarters and accommodations that afford privacy and security in resting, sleeping, dressing, bathing, personal hygiene, toileting, reading and writing.

**PERSONAL AFFAIRS:** You do not lose the right to vote, to hold a drivers license, to marry, to enter into contracts, and to make a Will simply because you have been admitted to a Psychiatric Hospital. However, these rights may be affected by the terms of a guardianship or by your mental status.

**FRESH AIR BREAKS:** You have the right to a fresh air break daily, as reasonable and safe to do so.

**YOUR RIGHTS AS A PATIENT AT PEMBROKE HOSPITAL - CARE AND TREATMENT**

**RIGHT TO TREATMENT:** you have the right to receive treatment which is suited to your needs and which is administered skillfully, safely, and humanely with full respect for your dignity and personal integrity.

**INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ILLNESS AND ITS TREATMENT:** You have the right to be told the nature of your illness, why the clinicians believe you need treatment, and what alternative treatments are available. You have the right to be told the name and position of your physician and other staff responsible for your care and treatment.

**RIGHT TO CONSENT AND REFUSE TREATMENT:** You have the right to consent to or refuse psychiatric medication or other treatment except in an emergency or when a court has appointed a guardian to give consent for you or when the court has a particular treatment. Before giving your consent to any treatment or research, you have the right to be informed of its ordered purpose, risks, side effects, and likely outcome, as well as alternative treatments available (including the alternative of no treatment). You may change your mind and withdraw your consent at any time after giving it.

**ACCESS TO YOUR RECORDS:** You have the right to see your own treatment records unless this would result in serious harm to you. Your attorney may inspect your treatment records. Your records may also be released to others when a decision is made that it would be in your best interest. Any decision regarding release of your records may be appealed to the head of the hospital and then to the Department of Mental Health.

**PARTICIPATION IN TREATMENT PLANNING:** You have the right to participate in the planning and implementing your treatment to the maximum extent possible.

**PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH:** Pembroke Hospital does not participate in investigational drug trials, research projects or clinical trials.

**RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION:** You may be restrained or secluded only in an emergency, when there is immediate and substantial danger to yourself or others. You may be secluded or restrained only for as long as is necessary to protect you or others from harm, and your condition must be carefully monitored during restraint and seclusion. If restraint or seclusion is used, you will be given an opportunity to comment on its use and the circumstances leading up to it.

**RULES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS GOVERNING YOUR TREATMENT:** You have the right to review a copy of the rules and regulation that relate to your care and treatment at this hospital. You may have additional rights granted by other state and federal laws and regulation.

**FILING A COMPLAINT AND FINDING OUT ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS**

**FILING A COMPLAINT:** You have the right to file a complaint if you believe your care or treatment is inhumane, dangerous or illegal. The Human Rights Officer at this hospital or other staff can explain the process and help you file a complaint.

**ACCESS TO LEGAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS:** Upon admission and upon your request at any time, you must be provided with the name, address, and telephone number of the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee, Committee for Public Counsel Services, the Protection and Advocacy Organization that provides free legal assistance to psychiatric patients. You must also be provided reasonable assistance in contacting attorneys or paralegals from these organizations, and you may meet with one of these attorneys or paralegal if they visit the hospital.

**Committee for Public Counsel Services**

44 Bromfield Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02210  
617-988-8341

**Office of Quality Monitoring**

The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Boulevard  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
630-792-5000  
Email: [complaint@jointcommission.org](mailto:complaint@jointcommission.org)

**Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee**

294 Washington Street- Suite 320  
Boston, MA 02108  
617-338-2345      800-342-9092  
Live Operator Mon/Wed/Fri 8:30 – 1:00

**Disability Law Center Inc.**

11 Beacon Street, Suite 925  
Boston, MA 02108  
617-723-8455

**The Department of Mental Health**

**617-626-8000 or 617-626-8117**

**MORE INFORMATION:** Additional information about your rights or how to obtain legal assistance may be obtained from the hospital's patient handbook, from your Human Rights Officer or from other staff.

<b>YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICERS:</b>	781 829-7115	Human Rights Officer	Mon- Fri 9 AM- 5 PM
	781-829-7000	Nursing Supervisor	All other times

## OPIOID MEDICATION EDUCATION FACT SHEET

***We are in the midst of a national Opioid Crisis. We hope this information is helpful to patients and families.***

**What is an Opioid Medication?** Opioid medication is a medication prescribed by a physician to treat moderate to severe pain that may not respond well to other pain medications. Conditions that may warrant the use of opioids include pain experienced following surgery, dental pain, and/or injury-related pain. Opioids help to manage pain by reducing the intensity of pain signals that reach the brain. Listed below are some of the more common opioid medications:

<u>Generic Name</u>	<u>Brand Name</u>
Codeine	only available in generic form
Fentanyl	Actiq, Duragesic, Fentora
Hydromorphone	Dilaudid, Exalgo
Hydrocodone	Lortab, Norco
Meperidine	Demerol
Methadone	Dolophine, Methadose
Morphine	Avinza, Kadian, MS Contin, Ora-Morph SR
Oxycodone	OxyContin, Oxyfast, Percocet, Roxicodone
Oxycodone and Naloxone	Targiniq ER

Most of these medications are taken by mouth. However, Fentanyl is available in a patch which allows the medication to be absorbed through the skin.

**What are the Side Effects of Opioid Medications?** All opioids can cause side effects. Some common, short term side effects include:

Constipation	Itching
Drowsiness	Nausea
Dry Mouth	Vomiting

**Additional side effects include:**

Decreased sex drive	Increased risk of falls
Decreased testosterone levels	Irregular menstruation
Depression	Opioid dependence
Dizziness	Opioid-induced abnormal pain sensitivity
Immunodeficiency	Slowed breathing (respiratory depression).

**Persons taking opioids should not drive or use heavy equipment** at home or at work, especially when first starting the medication. The use of opioids may increase a person's accident proneness and may result in increased risk of traffic accidents and accidental falls. It has been noted that older adults who use opioids have an increased risk of experiencing constipation, falls, nausea, sedation, urinary retention and vomiting. This also leads to a greater risk for injury in older adults.

**What are the Risks of Opioid Medications?** Over time some people may develop a tolerance to an opioid medication. This means that higher doses of the medication are needed to obtain the same results which can lead to increased side effects, dependence, and/or addiction. Dependence and/or addiction to opioid medications can result in unpleasant symptoms of withdrawal that may include increased feelings of sadness, irritability, nausea/vomiting, sweating and tremors.

The use of opioid medications with alcohol and/or other drugs that affect the central nervous system such as anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications increase the risk of adverse effects including cardiac arrest, hallucinations, memory loss, organ malfunction, severe headache/migraine, and respiratory failure. Fatal events such as overdose and sudden respiratory failure also increase significantly. Older persons are more likely to experience significant adverse effects from drug interactions at a higher rate than the general population.

When prescribing opioid medications for the treatment of pain, physicians should monitor closely for the effectiveness of the medication and the presence of side effects. To discontinue the use of opioid medication it is best to have a physician help in weaning off slowly which will allow the body to adjust and avoid withdrawal symptoms.

All medications, including opioid medications, should be stored in a safe and secure location in the home to prevent accidental use. This location should be out of reach and out of sight, especially with children in the home. Medications should never be left out and should be returned to the location after each use. Dispose of Fentanyl patches by folding the patch, sticky sides together, & flushing it down the toilet right away. Be sure to keep the Poison Control number posted in the home and programmed into your cell phone, if applicable.

### **Pembroke Hospital**

**Resources:**

[http://pain.about.com/od/treatment/a/types\\_of\\_opioids\\_for\\_chronic\\_pain.htm](http://pain.about.com/od/treatment/a/types_of_opioids_for_chronic_pain.htm)  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/prescription-drugs/opioids/what-are-opioids>,  
<http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/guide/narcotic-pain-medications>

Patient Handbook insert (October, 2016)

