

Treating Dental Pain:

ADA and AAOMS Recommendations for Opioid Use

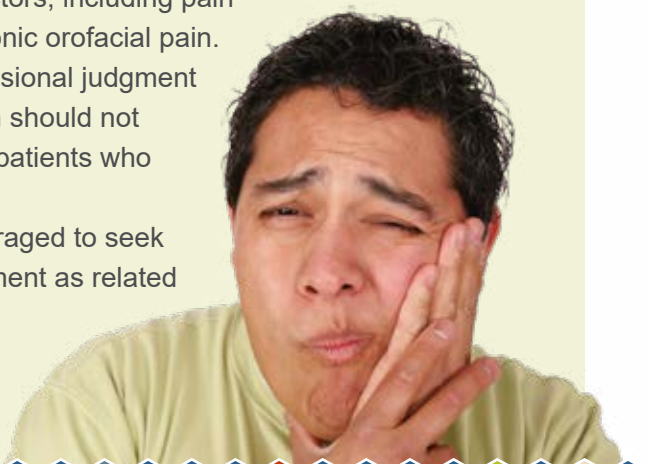
Opioids prescribed for pain management can be a potential source of misuse, abuse, addiction, and overdose. The problem is so prevalent in the United States that the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) has labeled it an epidemic (ASPA). Dentists and oral surgeons who prescribe opioids can help prevent abuse by establishing office protocols for prescribing opioids for dental pain and educating themselves and their patients about the risks of prescription opioids (Denisco, et al. 2011; AAOMS 2017).

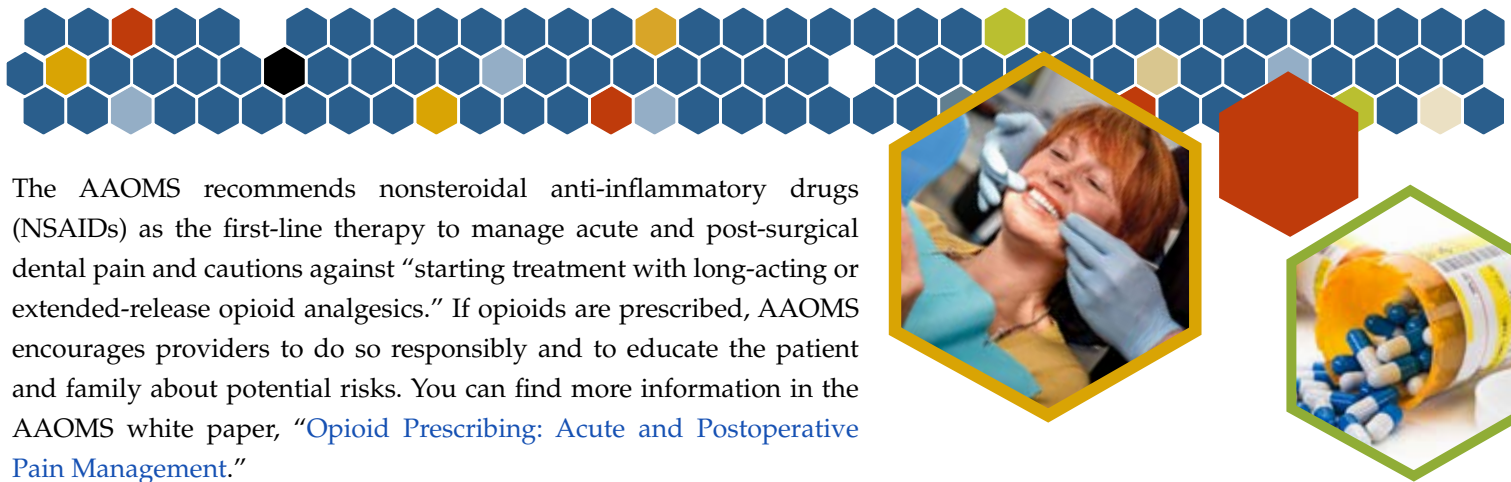
The American Dental Association (ADA) and the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) encourage dentists and oral surgeons to help prevent opioid abuse (Garvin). To provide guidance, the ADA adopted a Statement on the Use of Opioids in the Treatment of Dental Pain in October 2016. In 2017, the AAOMS released a white paper with recommendations and guidance for pain management. PrimeWest Health continues to recommend that these statements be closely reviewed, followed, and/or implemented in your practice.

ADA Statement on the Use of Opioids in the Treatment of Dental Pain*

- When considering prescribing opioids, dentists should conduct a medical and dental history to determine current medications, potential drug interactions and history of substance abuse.
- Dentists should follow and continually review Centers for Disease Control and State Licensing Boards recommendations for safe opioid prescribing.
- Dentists should register with and utilize prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) to promote the appropriate use of controlled substances for legitimate medical purposes, while deterring the misuse, abuse and diversion of these substances.
- Dentists should have a discussion with patients regarding their responsibilities for preventing misuse, abuse, storage and disposal of prescription opioids.
- Dentists should consider treatment options that utilize best practices to prevent exacerbation of or relapse of opioid misuse.
- Dentists should consider nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory analgesics as the first-line therapy for acute pain management.
- Dentists should recognize multimodal pain strategies for management for acute postoperative pain as a means for sparing the need for opioid analgesics.
- Dentists should consider coordination with other treating doctors, including pain specialists when prescribing opioids for management of chronic orofacial pain.
- Dentists who are practicing in good faith and who use professional judgment regarding the prescription of opioids for the treatment of pain should not be held responsible for the willful and deceptive behavior of patients who successfully obtain opioids for non-dental purposes.
- Dental students, residents and practicing dentists are encouraged to seek continuing education in addictive disease and pain management as related to opioid prescribing.

*Used with the permission of the ADA, which does not endorse or sponsor PrimeWest Health plans.





The AAOMS recommends nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) as the first-line therapy to manage acute and post-surgical dental pain and cautions against “starting treatment with long-acting or extended-release opioid analgesics.” If opioids are prescribed, AAOMS encourages providers to do so responsibly and to educate the patient and family about potential risks. You can find more information in the AAOMS white paper, “[Opioid Prescribing: Acute and Postoperative Pain Management](#).”

The AAOMS, along with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), also recommends that dentists and dental specialists participate in a free online Continuing Education (CE) course, “[Safe Opioid Prescribing for Acute Dental Pain](#)” (AAOMS 2018).

In addition, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) provides guidance, including how to utilize the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP), to prescribers on the [Opioid Dashboard](#).

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Sources:

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