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**Important Plan Information**

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| <Member First Name> <Member Last Name>  <Mailing Address Line 1>  <Mailing Address Line 2>  <Mailing City>, <Mailing State> <Mailing ZIP> |  |

<Date>

Dear <Member First Name> <Member Last Name>,

Know your options for non-opioid treatment of pain

Your doctor may prescribe opioids for pain after you have surgery, experience an injury, or if you have certain health conditions. But there are ways to manage moderate-to-severe pain **without** taking opioids. When you know more about these options, you can work with your doctor on a treatment plan that's both safe **and** effective.

**Understand the risks and side effects of opioid use**

Opioids can be an important part of your treatment plan. But they also put you at risk for substance use disorder, accidental overdose or even death.

Long-term use of opioids can also lead to:

* Tolerance (needing to take more of your medicine to get the same pain relief)
* Physical dependence (experiencing symptoms of withdrawal when you stop taking your medicine)

And even when taken as directed, opioids can have several side effects, such as:

* Constipation
* Nausea
* Vomiting
* Dry mouth
* Drowsiness
* Dizziness
* Confusion
* Depression
* Irritability
* Itching
* Difficulty breathing

Given these risks and side effects, it’s important to work with your doctor to make sure you’re managing your pain the right way.

**Concerned about taking opioids for pain?**

Talk to your doctor about ways to manage your pain without using prescription opioids. Some of the options below may work better and have fewer risks and side effects.

**Non-opioid prescription medicines**

* Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDS (for example, the tablet forms of diclofenac potassium, diclofenac sodium and meloxicam)
* Some medicines used for seizures, which can also help with certain types of nerve pain (for example, pregabalin)
* Muscle relaxants (for example, the tablet forms of baclofen and tizanidine)

Your **Aetna® Medicare prescription drug plan (PDP)** may cover these medicines. For coverage and cost details, give us a call at the phone number on your **Aetna member ID card.** Or see your plan’s formulary at **AetnaMedicare.com/benefits** for a list of covered drugs.

**Non-medication treatments**

* Physical therapy and occupational therapy
* Acupuncture for chronic low back pain
* Chiropractic services
* Mental/behavioral health services

These options may be covered under your **separate medical benefit including original Medicare Parts A & B**. Just call the phone number on your **insurer’s member ID card** for coverage and cost details.

**Protect yourself from an overdose**

Long-term use of opioids increases your risk of dependence and accidental overdose. If you’ve been taking opioids for a while, talk to your doctor about a prescription for naloxone. It can be given during an opioid overdose and may reverse its effects. Having naloxone available may give you and your loved ones peace of mind.

**MAT can help with opioid dependence**

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) combines medicines with counseling and behavioral therapies to treat opioid use disorders. It can also help some people sustain their recovery. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved three drugs to treat opioid dependence: buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone. All three are shown to be safe and effective when combined with counseling and psychosocial support. (Psychosocial support addresses a person’s emotional, social, mental, and spiritual needs.)Your separate medical benefit may cover these outpatient therapies.

**We’re here to help**

Have questions about this notice or your PDP’s coverage of pain management? Just call us at the phone number on your Aetna member ID card.

The formulary may change at any time. You will receive notice when necessary.

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