

## **Emergency Department Use of Narcotics (Opiates) and Sedatives**

In an effort to address concerns as well as the potential for abuse of narcotics, Van Wert County Hospital has adopted a new policy in the emergency room relating to narcotic and sedative medication prescriptions. Narcotics (Opiates) include pain medications such as Dilaudid, Morphine, OxyContin, Vicodin and Percocet. Sedatives include anxiety medications such as Ativan, Xanax and Valium.

The following policies and practices relate to patients seen in the Emergency Department who, after a medical screening exam, are found not to have an emergency medical condition:

- Prescriptions for narcotic and sedative medications that have been lost, stolen, or expired will not be refilled. It is the patient's responsibility to maintain active prescriptions with his or her primary care physician, specialty physician, or pain control clinic that have regularly prescribed these medications. Patients who have chronic pain will only receive non-narcotic pain medications as temporary treatment.
- Patients who have frequent or multiple visits to the Emergency Department seeking relief from painful conditions will be considered to have chronic pain. Painful conditions include (but are not limited to) migraine headaches, back pain, pelvic or ovarian pain, dental pain, kidney stones, and fibromyalgia. In these cases, non-narcotic pain medication should be prescribed.
- ER Physicians will assist patients in arranging appropriate follow-up care, but continuation of narcotics through the Emergency Department will not be done. In the event of an acute problem for which the Emergency Physician feels it is appropriate that a patient be given a narcotic or sedating medication (either by injection or by mouth), the hospital requires that a driver for that patient be physically present in the patient's room before administering the medication.
- Any patient returning to the Emergency Department for refills of prescriptions given by the Emergency room will be given a non-narcotic prescription. Follow-up with a primary care physician or specialist is a must for complete and continued care.

If you have any question involving this policy, feel free to call Amy Rode at 419-238.8623