

# Ontario's Narcotics Strategy

## Frequently Asked Questions

---

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

### Overview

#### Why is this being done?

The abuse and misuse of prescription narcotics and other controlled substances is a serious public health and safety issue in Ontario. This strategy is aimed at reducing the misuse, addiction, unlawful activities and deaths related to these medications.

Ontario's Narcotics Strategy is making the prescribing and dispensing of narcotics and other controlled substance medications safer and more secure. These measures will improve the quality and value of health care practices across the system.

#### How will this help Ontarians?

The Ontario's Narcotics Strategy will make the prescribing and dispensing of narcotics and other controlled substance medications safer and more secure, by:

- providing education and raising public awareness about the safe use of these drugs;
- educating the health care sector on appropriate prescribing and dispensing practices;
- monitoring the prescribing and dispensing of narcotics and controlled substances through a provincial narcotics monitoring system.
- providing options for treatment and support for those addicted to prescription narcotics and controlled substances.

## **What are prescription narcotics and controlled substances?**

Prescription narcotics are drugs commonly prescribed to relieve moderate to severe pain, such as codeine and oxycodone, commonly known as Tylenol® 3 and OxyNEO™. Controlled substances are drugs listed under Canada's *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*. They include narcotics and other drugs that are known to be potentially abused. Non-narcotic controlled substances include methylphenidate, benzodiazepines and barbiturates, among others, commonly known as Ritalin®, Valium® and Phenobarbital.

Additional monitored drugs listed under Ontario's *Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act, 2010* is also available on the ministry's website [www.ontario.ca/narcoticsstrategy](http://www.ontario.ca/narcoticsstrategy)

Please speak with your doctor, dentist or pharmacist to see if any drugs you are currently taking are on the list.

## **Where can I find information about issues related to prescription narcotics?**

Information for the public, including websites targeted to youth groups, young adults, aboriginal people and patients taking prescription narcotics, is available through a list of website resources available on the ministry's website [www.ontario.ca/narcoticsstrategy](http://www.ontario.ca/narcoticsstrategy)

## **How do I get help if I'm addicted to prescription narcotics?**

A number of substance abuse treatment programs, including withdrawal management, community counselling and residential treatment and support services are available across Ontario. Learn more: [www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/addict/addict\\_mn.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/addict/addict_mn.html)

## **New law**

### **What is the new law?**

Ontarians are now required to provide identification to their doctor, dentist, and in certain cases the pharmacist, in order to receive prescription narcotics and controlled substance medications. Learn more: [www.ontario.ca/narcoticsstrategy](http://www.ontario.ca/narcoticsstrategy)

### **How will the new law affect me?**

You are now required to provide an approved form of identification, such as a health card, Ontario Photo Card, etc., to your prescriber (e.g. doctor, dentist), and in certain cases the dispenser (e.g. pharmacist), when getting a prescription for a narcotic or controlled substance medication. This is in addition to other standard information (e.g. name, date of birth, gender, address, etc.) needed for regular prescriptions.

There are a number of approved forms of identification you can use. A complete list of approved forms of identification is available on the ministry's website [www.ontario.ca/narcoticsstrategy](http://www.ontario.ca/narcoticsstrategy). Please contact your doctor, dentist or pharmacist if you have questions about the list of approved identification.

## **What if I am unable to present any of the approved forms of identification?**

In situations where you are unable to present any of the approved forms of identification as noted above, we encourage you to speak to your prescriber about your specific situation.

## **Who is affected?**

Ontarians who are prescribed a narcotic or controlled substance medication, referred to as a monitored drug are required to present identification in order to receive their prescription or have it filled. Please speak with your doctor, dentist or pharmacist if your drug is included on the list of monitored drugs.

## **Is anyone exempted from the new requirements?**

The new requirements do not apply if a monitored drug is prescribed and dispensed to a hospital in-patient, an inmate in a correctional facility, or a young person in a youth custodial facility.

## **Which medications are on the monitored drug list?**

Please speak with your doctor, dentist or pharmacist to see if any medications you are taking are on the monitored drug list.

## **Someone else picks up my medications for me. What are the new requirements?**

If a representative (e.g. friend, family member) is picking up a monitored drug on your behalf, your representative is required to provide the following information to the pharmacy:

- name and address, and identification that verifies their name and address.

*\*Note:* Designating a representative to pick up a monitored drug for you is only permitted if you have already provided valid identification for your prescription. A third party pick-up cannot be used where a person does not present identification.

## How will my identification be used?

Your information will be used to monitor the prescribing and dispensing activities of monitored drugs. The main use of this information is to help educate and inform health care providers for improving prescribing and dispensing practices.

Other uses include:

- identifying patterns of inappropriate or excessive prescribing/dispensing;
- implementing a province-wide system for recognizing and alerting when attempts are made to visit multiple prescribers and/or pharmacies are detected.

## How will my privacy be protected?

Your privacy is important to us. The ministry has policies and procedures in place to protect the confidentiality and security of your personal information. Learn more at [www.ontario.ca/privacy](http://www.ontario.ca/privacy)