A guide for dentists

Prescribing addictive medicines



Treatment with addictive medicines is not without risk and should not be first choice. Consider if it is possible to avoid addictive medicines and instead prescribe non-addictive medicines.

Key points

When is it relevant to prescribe addictive medicines?

When the patient is in severe pain, e.g. related to major treatments and surgeries where paracetamol and/or NSAIDs are insufficient, prescribing opioids may be necessary.

It may also be necessary to prescribe benzodiazepines, e.g. for dental anxiety. If so, use the lowest possible dose.

Considerations before prescribing

Contact the patient's general practitioner if you are unsure about contraindications, or if the general practitioner must assume responsibility for the treatment.

Do the expected benefits outweigh the potential adverse effects?

Is the patient at particular risk of dependence or side effects, for example if the patient:

- Is elderly
- Is at risk for falls
- Has dementia
- Has reduced lung or kidney function
- Has a history of substance abuse
- Is already taking addictive medicines

What is the patient's current medication status? Be aware of prescriptions marked as private.

Can the treatment affect the patient's ability to drive or operate machinery?

Further reading

Scan the QR code or visit stps.dk/asl.

When prescribing addictive medicines

If in exceptional cases you do prescribe addictive medicines, you must:

- Select the smallest available pack size
- Select a drug with a short half-life
- Only issue a prescription to a patient once
- Inform the patient about the risks of addiction and frequent and/or severe side effects
- Obtain informed consent
- Consider if the patient's general practitioner should be involved in the treatment

This must be included in the patient record

- Indication for treatment
- Expected benefits
- Dose
- Duration
- Anticipated side effects
- Information given to the patient
- Agreements with patient, e.g. when to contact a GP
- The patient's consent
- Medical driving ban

Storage

Keep as few addictive medicines as possible in your clinic. Store safely and out of reach of unauthorized persons.

DANISH PATIENT SAFETY AUTHORITY