

**NARCOTIC PAIN MEDICATION SIDE EFFECTS**

**PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET**

**What are medication side effects?**

Medication side effects are any effects a medication has on your body, other than the intended effects. Medication side effects may occur even when a medication is prescribed and taken properly.

**How are medication side effects treated?**

Some medication side effects are harmless and require no intervention at all. **All medication side effects that require intervention are treatable and should be reported promptly to your physician.** Some common side effects associated with pain medication along with preventative measures and/or treatments are listed below.

PAIN MEDICATION SIDE EFFECT	PREVENTATIVE ACTION:
<i>Drowsiness/sedation</i>	<u>Notify your physician as soon as possible if you experience this side effect.</u> Your physician may do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adjust the medication dosage</li><li>• Provide alternative methods of pain relief</li></ul>
<i>Constipation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase activity</li><li>• Increase fluid intake</li><li>• Increase fiber/bulk in diet (fruits, vegetables, whole wheat bread)</li><li>• Stimulating laxative (such as Sennokot)</li></ul>
<i>Nausea (associated with pain medication or in conjunction with constipation)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid taking on an empty stomach</li><li>• Talk to your physician about anti-nausea drug or other medication</li></ul>

## What can I do to prevent medication side effects?

In addition to the preventative measures listed above, be sure to do the following:

- Take your medication as prescribed.
- Avoid alcohol. It may interact with your pain medication and cause dangerous levels of sedation.
- Keep scheduled appointments with your physician for continued monitoring of your condition.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while on pain medication

Remember, you will not reach your goal of adequate pain relief if side effects lead you to stop your pain medication or alter the dosage prescribed by your physician. Always call your physician to report any unpleasant medication side effects.

*For more Patient Education Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at [www.greenhosp.org](http://www.greenhosp.org) and click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education*