

Opioid Basics

MMEs (Morphine Milligram Equivalents) & Dose reductions

MMEs > 100 Have No Proven Benefit for Chronic Pain and Significant Proven Harms

The ‘number needed to kill’ for opioid doses over 200 MME is 32.

Kaplovitch, PLoS One 2015;10(8):e0134550.

MME=morphine milligram equivalent or the ‘INR’ of opioid dosing

Common Opioid Doses

Medication	tablets per day	MMEs
Acetaminophen-codeine 300-30mg (#3)	4	20
Morphine IR 15 mg	6	90
Oxycodone 15 mg	4	90
Hydromorphone 4 mg	6	96
Acetaminophen-hydrocodone 325-10	10	100
Fentanyl patch 50 mcg	(1)	120

“We know of no other medication routinely used for a nonfatal condition that kills patients so frequently.”

Freiden, NEJM 2016: 374;16:1503.

Overdose risk:

Doses of 50 MME 2x

Doses of 100 MME 9x

** compared with doses less than 20 MME, CDC Guidelines 2016*

Recommended prescriber monitoring frequency:

Opioid dose > 50	Face-to-face visit every 90 days
Opioid doses > 120	Face-to-face visit every 30 days

Source: CDC Guidelines, WA State Medical Directors Agency guidelines

Prescribers should “carefully justify” opioid doses in excess of 90 MME. *Source: CDC*

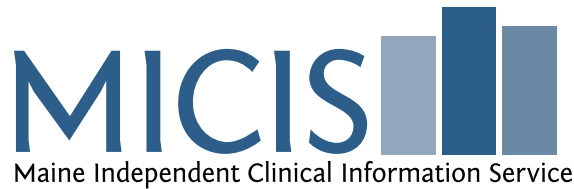
2016 CDC Recommendations

Discuss risks and benefits

Use the lowest effective dose

Evaluate benefits and harms frequently

Improving Opioid Prescribing and Patient Safety: Educational Outreach



Disclaimer

These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating healthcare provider based on an individual patient's clinical condition. This document presents only general information regarding prescribing laws in the state of Maine. Prescribers in Maine are instructed to independently study Chapter 488 and comply with current state law and rules.

Learning Objectives

- ▶ Calculate morphine milligram equivalents & evidence behind limits
- ▶ Discuss reduction (tapering) strategies

Additional Resources

- ▶ 2016 CDC Opioid Prescribing Guidelines: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6501e1.htm
- ▶ Agency Medical Directors' Group, Washington State, 2015 Opioid Prescribing Guideline summary and MME calculator: www.agencymeddirectors.wa.gov
- ▶ Caring for ME: a joint project of Maine Quality Counts and the Maine Medical Association: qclearninglab.org/welcome-caring-for-me/
- ▶ Quality Counts Controlled Medication Playbook: mainequalitycounts.org/what-we-do/population-health/chronic-pain-and-controlled-medication-playbook/
- ▶ Opioid and Chronic Pain Toolkit available at MICISMaine.org

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Education Statement

This monograph was created in support of accompanying live educational activities. This monograph is not approved for medical education credit.

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