

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: AVOIDING OPIOIDS: TREATING PAIN BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER SURGERY
REPORT: MB #5111

BACKGROUND: Opioids are a group of pain-relieving drugs that work by interacting with opioid receptors in your cells. They are grown and developed from poppy plants. Some examples of opioids are morphine and fentanyl. While opioids are effective for treating pain, they are also an addictive substance. In lower doses, opioid medication can make you feel sleepy, but higher doses can slow down breathing and heart rate, which can lead to death. The feelings of pleasure that can result in taking opioids can lead to addiction.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/prescription-drug-abuse/expert-answers/what-are-opioids/faq-20381270>)

DIAGNOSING: There are many ways of treating pain, and while opioids are one of the more common pain relief methods, many people are reconsidering what they want in pain relief. Some alternatives to opioids include physical therapy, acupuncture and even injections or nerve blockers. There are cutting-edge ways of treating pain as an alternative to opioids such as radio waves, electrical signals, and even spinal cord stimulation.

(Source: <https://www.asahq.org/madeforthismoment/pain-management/non-opioid-treatment/>)

NEW TECHNOLOGY: One new way of non-opioid way to relieve chronic pain is spinal cord stimulation (SCS), if you are trying to avoid opioids when other chronic pain treatments such as physical therapy, surgery or injections do not work. The SCS disrupts pain signals that travel between the brain and spinal cord, and with a neurostimulator implanted under the skin, delivers the stimulation. Some of the types of pain the SCS treats is back pain, injuries to the spinal cord, post-surgical pain, and even pain after an amputation. With any surgery or new treatment, there are side effects or complications that can still happen, such as infection within the first two to eight weeks, bleeding, device migration and in extremely rare cases, spinal cord trauma.

(Source: <https://www.medtronic.com/us-en/patients/treatments-therapies/spinal-cord-stimulation-chronic-pain/therapy-overview.html>
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/treatment-tests-and-therapies/treating-pain-with-spinal-cord-stimulators>)

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If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at mthomas@ivanhoe.com