

## **POTENTIATION – MAKING THE MOST OF OPIOIDS**

The oldest measure to either minimize the dosage or make an opioid more effective has been to add a chemical agent that makes the opioid act “longer and stronger”. This concept is known as “potentiation” or “to make more potent”.

**HISTORY:** Various herbs such as boswellia were used with opium in ancient times. Physicians in the ancient world, Dioscorides in the first century CE, and Galien in the second (138-201 CE) recorded the use of opium combined with cannabis for many therapeutic purposes. Physicians during the American Revolution titrated alcohol with opium for tuberculosis. “Doc Holiday” survived many years with this regimen for his tuberculosis or sarcoid. British physicians combined aspirin with morphine around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Later they determined that a stimulant-type drug, including cocaine, made morphine more effective for the person with severe pain. This was called the Brompton Cocktail named after Brompton Hospital in London. Beginning around World War II, American pharmacological companies began combining the opioids codeine, hydrocodone, and oxycodone with aspirin, caffeine, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and phenacetin. Today, the most popular potentiating combination is acetaminophen with codeine, hydrocodone (example: Vicodin®), and oxycodone (example: Percocet®).

### **MAIN MESSAGE**

1. An opioid should almost NEVER be taken alone by a person with IPS. Why? First, you don’t get the full effect of the opioid and second, without a potentiator, you will need to take a higher opioid dose when a lower would suffice.
2. Every IPS patients needs to identify at least 2 potentiators that you can find some that don’t bother your stomach or cause headache, drowsiness, or dizziness.

### **POTENTIATORS AVAILABLE:**

Caffeine Tablet	Taurine	Dextroamphetamine
Mucuna	CBD Products	Benadryl®
Boswellia	Adderall®	GABA
Gabapentin	Methylphenidate	

### **CONSIDER**

1. Switch to an opioid with acetaminophen: codeine compound, Vicodin® (hydrocodone), Percocet® (oxycodone) or take a potentiator with your opioids.
2. Don’t take alcohol, marijuana, or a benzodiazepine (Xanax®, Ativan®, Valium®, Klonopin®) at the same time you take an opioid. Separate the two by at least an hour to avoid over-sedation.

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