

Most back pain patients halt opioid use after surgery

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(HealthDay)—Duration of preoperative opioid use appears to be the

most important predictor of sustained opioid use following back surgery, according to a study published in the June 6 issue of *The Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery*.

Andrew J. Schoenfeld, M.D., from Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and colleagues analyzed 2006 to 2014 TRICARE insurance claims to identify 27,031 adults who underwent lumbar interbody arthrodesis, lumbar discectomy, lumbar decompression, or lumbar posterolateral arthrodesis. The [duration](#) of preoperative [opioid](#) use was categorized (acute exposure, exposed without sustained use, intermediate sustained use, and chronic sustained use) in order to evaluate the association of preoperative and postoperative opioid use.

The researchers found that following the [surgical procedure](#), 67.1 percent of patients discontinued opioid use by 30 days, while 86.4 percent ceased use by 90 days. Overall, 8.8 percent of patients continued to use opioid medications at six months. Duration of preoperative opioid use was the demographic and clinical factors that most predicted continued opioid use following a surgical procedure.

"The majority of patients who were using [prescription opioids](#) prior to the surgical procedure discontinued these medications postoperatively," the authors write. "Duration of preoperative use appears to be the most important predictor of sustained use following a surgical procedure."

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