

Non-Drug Treatments for Pain


Follow your surgeon's advice for non-medication ways to treat pain. Examples include:

- Rest
- Hot or cold packs
- Relaxation or meditation

Medication for Pain

When taking medication for pain:

- Take your medication before the pain gets too severe.
- Do not take your medication on an empty stomach.
- Pay attention to the dose you are taking and the time you take it. Plan your physical activity 30 to 60 minutes after taking your medication. This is when it is working best.
- Once your pain starts to get better after a few days, reduce the medication you take until you no longer need it.
- Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about your medications.
- **If you don't use all the opioid medication, bring it back to a pharmacy. Do not throw it in the garbage or down the toilet.**
- Store opioids out of the reach of children. Do not share your opioid medication with anyone else.

 **Diversion (sharing or selling) of opioids is a crime!**

MANAGING PAIN AFTER SURGERY

Pain after surgery is normal and it will improve each day as you heal. Managing your pain will help you resume your normal activities. You can manage your pain at home with non-drug treatments and pain medication.



If you have a little pain:

You can use non-opioid medication like acetaminophen (Tylenol™) and ibuprofen (Advil™) to help to manage your pain.

- You can get this medication at the pharmacy without a prescription. It is safe for most people, but your doctor will warn you if you shouldn't take it.
- You can take this medication every 4 to 6 hours and it starts to work 15 to 30 minutes after taken.
- If your pain is still not letting you do simple things like walking to the bathroom, use your opioid medication. Only use as much as you need to manage your pain. **Do not take more than the prescribed limit.**

 **If your pain is manageable, do not use opioids.**

If you have a lot of pain:

You can use opioid medication like tramadol, hydromorphone and oxycodone if your doctor prescribed it for you.

- Opioids can provide good pain relief but may make you feel nauseous, sleepy and constipated. Follow the advice of your doctor or pharmacist if you have any of these side effects.
- Constipation is common. You can try the following things to help:
 - Drink more liquids and eat more fruits and vegetables
 - Increase walking and activity
 - Use a mild laxative or stool softener
- Even for major surgeries, opioids are usually needed for only a few days. See a doctor if your pain is much greater than what you were told to expect.
- The risk of addiction is higher the longer you use opioids.
- Opioids should not be mixed with sleeping pills, muscle relaxants, alcohol or cannabis products.

