

## **Managing your pain after surgery**

**Pain Management** promotes healing and aids recovery after surgery. It helps you rest and allows you to do the exercises needed to return you to your best function as quickly and safely as possible.

The effects of anesthesia and pain medication, given to you at the surgery center or hospital, may not wear off by the time you arrive home. **Begin taking your prescribed medication as directed even if you feel you don't need it. Waiting to long before taking pain medication may cause increased pain and a temporary "setback" in your recovery.**

You will receive a single narcotic prescription post-operatively upon discharge from the surgery center or hospital. **NO refills will be given prior to your 2-week post op visit; please plan accordingly.** Narcotics will help reduce the pain, but not eliminate your pain symptoms. It's normal to have pain post operatively. During the initial recovery period (first 24-48 hours) take the medication ever 4-6 hours as directed by your physician. This will keep your pain at a manageable level.

**As early as 3-4 days after discharge you should consider to being to taper your pain medication. You can begin to taper your pain medication by lengthening the time between doses.**

**Keep a record of when you take your medications.** It is easy to forget when you last took your pain medication.

**Do not drive while take narcotics.**

**Remember to use ice.** Cold therapy is on of the best ways to provide pain relief and help with inflammation.

**Elevate the surgical limb.** This helps decrease swelling and pain.

Do this to wean off short acting pain medicine:

When you start weaning off the medicine, increase the amount of time between doses and decrease the amount of tablets.

For example:

If taking 2 tablets every 4 hours:	Take 1 tablet every 5-6 hours for 1-2 days
Then:	Take 1 tablet every 7-8 hours for 1-2 days
Next:	Take 1 tablet only for severe breakthrough pain
Finally: (By week 2 Postop)	Use ONLY over the counter pain medication (Tylenol, Aleve, Advil, etc)

Again, utilize over the counter pain medications (Tylenol, Aleve, Advil etc) for pain relief to bridge while decreasing narcotic tablets.

Common side effects of narcotic pain medications are nausea and constipation. You may start taking an over-the-counter antacid and stool softener before surgery to help minimize these side effects. Continue taking as needed after surgery.

**\*Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDS)** are used to decrease pain, swelling and fever. Aspirin, naproxen, and ibuprofen are common over-the-counter NSAIDS. Celebrex is a prescription NSAID. Your physician may recommend taking an NSAID in addition to the narcotic pain medication.

How to taper off Narcotic pain medication:

Post Op Day 1-2:	Take 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours (Resume NSAID medication)
Post Op Day 3-4:	Take 1 tablet every 6-8 hours
Post Op Day 5-6:	Take 1 tablet every 12 hours
Week 2 Post Op:	Take 1 tablet at night or for severe breakthrough pain
Finally: (By week 2 Postop)	Use ONLY over the counter pain medication (Tylenol, Aleve, Advil, etc)

\*Bridge with Tylenol/NSAIDS(Ibuprofen/Aleve) in between taking Narcotic pain medication.

Example:

7 am	Oxycodone (1 tablet)
8 am	Aleve (2 tablets) / ICE
10 am	Tylenol (2 tablets/ 1,000 mg)
2 pm	Tylenol (2 tablets/1,000 mg) / ICE
8 pm	Aleve (2 tablets)
9 pm	Tylenol (2 tablets/1,000 mg) / ICE
Bedtime	Oxycodone (1 tablet)/Ice

\*Gradually discontinue oxycodone or hydrocodone dose in the AM then PM.

\*Taper off of Narcotic pain medication by 2 weeks.

\*Maximum amount of Tylenol daily is 3,000 mg. (Can alternate Tylenol and Ibuprofen)

\*Maximum amount of Aleve daily is 4 tablets.

\*Maximum amount of Ibuprofen daily is 3,200 mg.

\*Utilize ICE every 2 hours for 20 minutes. Avoid direct contact with skin.

**\*If you have any questions or concerns, call Hanna at 651-351-2653\***