

PERI ANESTHESIA CARE DEPARTMENT- SURGICAL SERVICES

PATIENT'S PAIN MANAGEMENT AFTER SURGERY

Discharge Instructions: After Your Surgery

Coping with pain

If you have pain after surgery, pain medicine will help you feel better. Take it as told, before pain becomes severe. Also, ask your doctor or pharmacist about other ways to control pain. This might be with heat, ice, or relaxation. And follow any other instructions your surgeon or nurse gives you.

Are there ways to manage pain besides medicine?

Yes. Medicine is an important part of pain management. But there are other things you can do, too. They include:

- *Rest*
- *Using cold or heat (if your doctor suggested this)*
- *Keeping the painful part protected and elevated- if applicable*
- *Relaxation exercises or meditation*

Doing these things can help reduce how much pain medicine you need.

Your doctor will tell you what kind of pain to expect after surgery. They might give you a prescription for pain medicines to take after you go home.

To take your medicine safely:

- Take only the amount of medicine your doctor prescribes, and only as often as they tell you to.

If your doctor prescribed an opioid medicine:

- **Stop taking the medicine as soon as your pain gets better** – For some opioids, you might need to reduce the dose gradually. You can continue taking other pain medicines while you are stopping the opioid.
- **Get rid of any leftover opioids** – Do not throw these away in the regular trash. Your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist can suggest ways to get rid of them.

It's important to take your pain medicines exactly how the doctor or nurse tells you to. Taking too much of any medicine can be dangerous. In particular, Opioids, come with serious risks. If you take too much, or take opioids with alcohol or certain other drugs, it can cause serious harm. It can even cause death from overdose. Some people can also get addicted to them.

Other Tips for taking pain medicine

To get the best relief possible, remember these points:

- Pain medicines can upset your stomach. Taking them with a little food may help.
- Most pain relievers taken by mouth need at least 20 to 30 minutes to start work.
- Taking medicine on a schedule can help you remember to take it. Try to time your medicine so that you can take it before starting an activity. This might be before you get dressed, go for a walk, or sit down for dinner.
- **Constipation** is a common side effect of pain medicines. Call your doctor before taking any medicines such as laxatives or stool softeners to help ease constipation. Also ask if you should skip any food. Drinking lots of fluids and eating foods such as fruits and vegetables that are high in fiber can also help. Remember, do not take laxatives unless your surgeon has prescribed them.
- Drinking alcohol and taking pain medicine can cause dizziness and slow your breathing. It can even be deadly. Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medicine.
- Pain medicine can make you react more slowly to things. **Do not drive or run machinery while taking pain medicine.**

Call your surgeon if...

- You still have pain an hour after taking medicine. The medicine may not be strong enough.
- You feel too sleepy, dizzy, or groggy. The medicine may be too strong.
- You have side effects like nausea, vomiting, or skin changes, such as rash, itching, or hives.
- **If you have any questions about your medicine or how to take it.**