

POST-OPERATIVE PAIN CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS

ICE

Applying ice to the surgical site can help manage swelling and discomfort by calming inflammation. Regular use may even lessen the need for pain medications. Try placing crushed ice over the area for about 20 minutes, four times a day. If you don't have ice available, you can use a bag of frozen vegetables or a cold pack as an alternative.

PAIN MEDICATION

You were prescribed a narcotic or tramadol for pain relief. These should be taken only when necessary and never in amounts greater than prescribed. Do not take pain medication with alcohol, sleep aids, or other sedatives. Narcotics can cause constipation. You should take a stool softener regularly, and you may also want to take a laxative. Narcotics can cause nausea and should be taken with food. You should plan on gradually reducing your use of narcotics as your symptoms improve, by taking them in smaller doses or less often. Many pain medications contain Tylenol/acetaminophen. Your total Tylenol/acetaminophen intake from any source should be less than 3,000mg per day. Do not use Tylenol products if you have liver failure.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES (NSAIDS)

You may have been prescribed Toradol (ketorolac) or another NSAID such as ibuprofen, Motrin, Naproxen, Aleve, or Celebrex. In some cases, you may simply be asked to purchase NSAIDs over the counter. Do not take NSAIDs if you are on blood thinners (other than aspirin), have reduced kidney function or kidney failure, currently have a stomach ulcer, have a history of ulcers related to NSAID use, or have allergies to these medications. NSAIDs will be prescribed for 5 days or less and should only be taken sparingly after that. For detailed guidance, please follow the discharge instructions provided by your surgical facility.

NERVE BLOCK

For some surgeries, you will be given a nerve block (you would have consented to this before surgery). This typically lasts 6-12 hours. Begin taking your pain medication before, or as soon as, you notice the nerve block wearing off (return of tingling or sensation to the operative limb or area). Once the nerve block starts to fade, it wears off quickly, and if you do not have pain medication already in your system, it can be hard to get the pain back under control. If you did not receive a nerve block, you probably received some local anesthetic directly in the operative area. This will wear off more quickly than the nerve block. In this case, pain medication should also be taken prior to the local anesthetic dissipating.

ELEVATION AND ACTIVITY

Keeping the surgical area elevated can help lessen swelling and ease discomfort. Gentle activity and movement may also support the healing process. However, the amount of exercise, motion, and weight bearing allowed after surgery will depend on the specific procedure you've had. Your surgical team will provide detailed restrictions and recommendations in your discharge instructions.