



Post-Surgery Pain Management

Please review these instructions on controlling postoperative pain carefully. They will help provide you with the best experience after your surgical procedure. Our goal for you is to manage your pain well enough to allow you to do the things you need to do to heal: walk, eat, breathe deeply and sleep.

It is normal to feel pain after your surgery. Pain is usually the worst for the first 2-3 days and can usually be well controlled with a schedule of over-the-counter medications and icing.

Prescription opioid pain medications are provided only if needed after taking the rest of the regimen.

Medication Based Treatments

1. **Take 2 tablets of over-the-counter Tylenol 500mg (or generic acetaminophen) every 6 hours** for 3 days, then only as needed to control discomfort. [DO NOT exceed 4000 mg in a 24-hour period, as this can be damaging to your liver]
2. **Take 3 tablets of over-the-counter Advil or Motrin 200mg (or generic ibuprofen) every 6 hours** with food or milk for 3 days, then only as needed to control discomfort. [DO NOT use Advil/Motrin if you have a history of stomach or intestinal ulcers or have had problems taking aspirin in the past]
3. **Most patients do not need opioids to manage their post-surgical pain.** However, in certain circumstances, a prescription for opioid (narcotic) pain medications may be sent to your pharmacy after your procedure.
4. **You will not be able to drive or operate machinery while taking prescription pain medication.** If you use an opioid, you must beware of becoming drowsy or inattentive. Additional side effects include dizziness, lightheadedness, constipation, nausea, and vomiting.
5. **Constipation is a commonly caused by taking opioids.** Taking colace and senna after surgery can be helpful to treat constipation. Taking opioid pain medications after your surgery will increase your chances of developing constipation and is another reason to avoid them. A mild laxative (Milk of Magnesia or MiraLAX) should be taken according to package directions if there are no bowel movements after 48 hours.
6. **Ibuprofen works just as well.** Medical studies have shown that 400mg of ibuprofen provides as much pain relief as 5mg of prescription opiates.
7. **Fortunately, 90% of surgery patients report that their pain is either mild or gone after four days.** If you have severe or increasing pain after four days, please call our office.

Non-Medication Based Treatments

1. **Apply ice to your hernia area and incisions for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for 48 hours.** The patients who ice the most have the least amount of pain and swelling after their surgery. Many patients who have elevated pain levels or uncomfortable swelling and bruising did not use ice regularly after surgery. Ziploc bags with crushed ice or frozen peas are commonly used along with a towel between the bag and your skin. Icing more frequently and for a longer duration is fine. It's okay not to ice overnight but if you wake up in pain, you may find icing helpful.
2. **Other non-medication therapies can be effective.** Some patients use other non-medication therapies for pain relief such as mindful breathing, music, relaxation, meditation, daily reflection, and short walks.