
What to Expect After Surgery

You may be taking a prescription medication for your pain.

The medication is often also called a narcotic or opioid and is different from pain medications like Tylenol[®] or Advil[®].

As your body heals, pain will decrease. Decrease (wean) the amount of pain pills you take until you're not taking any (see below for details).

This guideline instructs how to decrease your medication given to you after your surgery.

If you were taking medication before surgery, continue taking that as prescribed by your provider.

Important Tips:

- Opioids can lead to addiction if you don't manage them carefully. It's important to gradually stop taking them over several weeks or days.
- You may have to accept some amount of pain in order to wean off the meds.
- DO NOT stop taking the pain medication all at once.
- DO slowly decrease the amount you take until you're not taking any.

How do I Control the Pain?

As you slowly decrease your opioid pain meds, you can control your pain other ways:

- Tylenol[®] (Acetaminophen)*
- Advil[®] (Ibuprofen)*
- Ice and/or heat

* Ask your doctor before taking any medications!

To Wean off Medication Given For Surgery

There are 2 parts:

1) INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TIME BETWEEN DOSES

For example, if you are taking a pain med every 4 hours, stretch the time between doses:

- Take same dose every 5-6 hours for 5-7 days.
- Then, take same dose every 7-8 hours for 5-7 days.

2) DECREASE THE DOSE

- For example, if you are taking 2 pills at a time, start taking 1 pill each time for 5-7 days.
- If taking 1 pill each time, cut pill in half and only take a half each dose for 5-7 days.
- Then, try to stop taking the medication completely.