



Pain and Discomfort Management

This information is provided to assist you in the management of postoperative discomfort and pain. It is intended as a general reference. You may also be provided with information at the time of your surgery that is more specific for your particular needs.

Discomfort or pain is an unpleasant after-effect of nearly all surgical procedures. The quality, intensity, location and duration of postoperative discomfort or pain are influenced by factors such as:

- the specific surgery performed, surgical technique
- the presence or absence of infection at the time of surgery
- anatomic location of the surgery
- patient's pain reaction threshold
- patient's emotional state (anxiety and depression will often increase the perception and severity of pain)

These are some measures that can be taken to lessen pain. Some or all of them may apply to your specific situation.

1. Keep your head elevated. This lessens the blood pressure and general blood flow to the head and mouth. Sleep with your head elevated for the first three to five days following surgery.
2. Use ice packs over the first 24 to 48 hours to minimize swelling.
3. Minimize use or movement of the jaws, tongue and lips. Avoid unnecessary talking and do not chew hard foods, chewy foods, or gum for the first week following surgery.
4. Drink liquids and eat very soft foods until your initial pain and surgical swelling have resolved. Eat smaller volumes more frequently for the first days following surgery to avoid lengthy chewing periods.
5. Maintain good oral hygiene.
6. Avoid strenuous physical activities for three to seven days.
7. Use pain medications as directed.

The following is a medication protocol for the management of moderate to severe pain. You should also use the chart space at the bottom of the opposite side to keep a record of your pain medication use. Be careful when using more than one medication to avoid losing track of the amount and times you have used pain medications. Please call the office for advice as needed.

For Moderate to Severe Pain:

We generally recommend ibuprofen, unless the patient is allergic or cannot take ibuprofen for any reason. Take 600 to 800 milligrams of ibuprofen every 6-8 hours for the first three days postoperatively. This medication will help to decrease inflammation and therefore lessens pain. Dose is based on body weight and tolerance. We recommend 600-mg. every six to eight hours for patients weighing between 100 and 150 lbs. and 800-mg. every six to eight hours for patients over 150 lbs. Using the ibuprofen for three days carries the patient through the time when surgical pain is most significant. You may need to use ibuprofen or a similar medication for up to two weeks following surgery such as extraction of impacted teeth. Ibuprofen may cause stomach upset. Do not use ibuprofen and similar medications if you are allergic to aspirin or have a history of stomach ulcers or bleeding.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be used for patients who cannot use ibuprofen or other NSAID medications. 500mg. doses taken every 4-6 hours is recommended. Do not exceed 3000mg/day! Remember that many of the prescription medications contain acetaminophen, which will need to be considered in calculation of your total daily intake.

*** ask for advice regarding use of aspirin or NSAIDS if you have a history of (or predisposition to) gastrointestinal bleeding, allergy to these types of medications, chronic use of similar medications, or if you are using anticoagulants (blood thinners) of any type ****

In some cases you will be provided with a prescription for a stronger pain mediation. This will be the case when more severe pain levels may be anticipated. These medications are generally based with narcotics such as codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, hydromorphone, and others. This medication will be used for "breakthrough" pain that cannot be resolved with ibuprofen or acetaminophen alone. You should begin using this medication at a scheduled time if so advised, or if you feel pain or discomfort prior to the time when ibuprofen is to be given again. This medication will have a dosage and frequency that is determined by the patients' body weight and the severity of pain.

If you are taking two or more medications it is important that you keep track of the doses and times that you take them. You should not exceed the maximum daily allowance for either medication. Do not take other pain medications or consume alcohol while taking the medications described above. You should attempt to stop using the stronger pain medication first, and then taper off the ibuprofen.

Time:	Surgery Day	Day #1	Day #2	Day #3
08:00 am				
09:00				
10:00				
11:00				
Noon				
01:00pm				
02:00				
03:00				
04:00				
05:00				
06:00				
07:00				
08:00				
09:00				
10:00				
11:00				
Midnight				
01:00am				
02:00				
03:00				
04:00				
05:00				
06:00				
07:00				