



Pain Control and Other Medications

Pain is common after surgery. Most patient typically have pain at their incisions. It is also common to have vague aches and pains at the site of surgery, which is frequently away from the incision, especially with laparoscopic or minimally invasive surgery. If you have had a laparoscopic procedure, it is common to have pain in your shoulder for 24-36 hours. This is due to the gas pumped into the abdomen during the procedure leading to stretching and irritation of the diaphragm, which then refers the pain to your shoulder.

When you leave the hospital, you will typically have a medication for medicine to help with the pain from your incisions. You should have given your pharmacy information to the registration agent at the hospital for the physician to e-prescribe your medication (electronically send the prescription directly to the pharmacy). You may resume any medications you have been taking for your other medical conditions unrelated to your surgical procedure unless otherwise specified in your discharge paperwork.

Typically, narcotic medication is a combination of an opiate (e.g. Codeine, Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, Hydromorphone) and acetaminophen (Tylenol). You may take acetaminophen alone instead of your narcotic medication. You may take anti-inflammatory medications (Advil, Aleve, Motrin, ibuprofen, naproxen) in addition to a narcotic or acetaminophen. Do not take your prescription pain medication with acetaminophen alone, as that could lead to an overdose of acetaminophen. Ask your surgeon if you can take anti-inflammatory medications if you are already taking Aspirin.

Examples of over-the-counter pain medication:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 500-1000 mg by mouth every 4-6 hours as needed for pain
 - Do not take more than 3000-4000 mg of Acetaminophen per day.
- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) 400-800 mg by mouth every 4-6 hours as needed for pain
 - Do not take more than 3200 mg of Ibuprofen per day
- Naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn) 250-500 mg by mouth every 8-12 hours as needed for pain
 - Do not take more than 1500 mg of Naproxen per day
- Aspirin is typically not recommended as a pain reliever. Use Ibuprofen or Naproxen instead.

A refill of your narcotic pain medication requires a return visit to the clinic. By state law, narcotic pain medications must be filled at a pharmacy using a written prescription. Narcotic pain medications cannot be called into the pharmacy. Most patient should not require a refill of their pain medications after surgery.



You may apply ice and heat to tender areas for 15-20 minutes at a time 3-4 times per day. Topical pain medications such as capsaicin may be used on areas of intact skin (not on an incision).

If you have had abdominal surgery (especially a hernia repair), you may wear an abdominal binder to help reduce the pressure on your abdominal incisions. Splinting your stomach by placing a pillow over your abdomen with firm pressure before coughing or movement can help reduce the pain.