



Policy on Pain Control

Pain is common after surgery. Most patients typically have pain at their incisions. It is 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 medical assistant in the surgeon's office as well as to the registration agent at the hospital for the physician to e-prescribe your medication (electronically send the prescription directly to the pharmacy).

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 or be sent via an e-prescription. Narcotic pain medications cannot be called into the pharmacy. Most patients should not require a refill of their pain medications after surgery.

The surgeons are not pain management specialists and will typically not prescribe more than 1 refill of narcotic pain medication. If you have ongoing pain that requires the use of narcotics for longer than 2 weeks, you will be referred to a pain management specialist for long-term management.

Texas state law requires the physicians to access a database that keeps a record of all controlled substances prescribed to patients. The Texas PMP is a patient care tool that is used to inform physicians of prescription drug misuse and diversion. This information is shared with several other states and entities. The goal is to ensure that patients are taking their medications appropriately and not obtaining the same medication from multiple sources.

Other medication options for pain management include Acetaminophen (Tylenol), anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs such as ibuprofen/Motrin, Naprosyn/Aleve, ketorolac/Toradol, etodolac), muscle relaxants, and neuropathic medications (Gabapentin/Neurontin, Pregabalin/Lyrica). Your surgeon and anesthesiologist will use multiple modalities for pain management during surgery as well as after to help keep you comfortable.

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).

Should you have any questions regarding pain control after surgery, please do not hesitate to ask your surgeon.