

The aim in my practice is to minimize pain and maximize comfort in children during the post-operative period. Pain varies among children post-operatively from mild to severe. The amount of pain that children experience postoperatively depends on several factors, such as the type of surgery that is performed as well as your child's tolerance to pain.

There are several options for the treatment of pain. For children, liquid Tylenol may be sufficient to control post-operative pain. Tylenol should be given in the liquid form instead of the chewable preparation. Medications such as ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, aspirin or any other aspirin containing or non-steroidal pain relievers should not be used 14 days prior to and for 14 days after surgery, due to the increase risk of bleeding. Vitamin use can also lead to bleeding in the post-operative period and should not be used for 14 days prior to or for 14 days after surgery. The exception to this rule is for children who are having ear tubes placed. Vitamins can be given up to a week prior to surgery and resumed one week after surgery. Foods that are vitamin enriched should not pose a significant risk of bleeding unless they are highly enriched with fish oil or Vitamin E.

The most common narcotic medication available for pain control is Codeine. However, in a small number of individuals', codeine can be metabolized to a higher level of morphine in the body. The FDA has warned against the use of codeine in children with the diagnosis of sleep apnea, due to the possibility of making their breathing worse in the immediate post-operative period.

In my practice, we use oxycodone for pain control in children. Oxycodone has the advantage of not being converted to high levels of morphine in the body in sensitive individuals and comes in a liquid form. I prescribe it based on your child's weight and use the lowest dose possible to control pain. Oxycodone does not contain Tylenol, and parents have the choice of trying Tylenol first to manage their child's pain. If your child's pain is not controlled with Tylenol, then oxycodone can be added. Oxycodone is given every 6 hours as needed for pain. Oxycodone should only be used as long as your child needs pain medication. Signs of pain in young children are refusing food or water, drooling and not engaging in play activities. If these symptoms of pain are unrecognized postoperatively, your child can become dehydrated and require a trip to the emergency room. It is important to manage your child's pain adequately by staying ahead of the pain, rather than letting your child suffer and become afraid to eat and drink.

If your child refuses liquid pain medication, try mixing it with chocolate or strawberry syrup. Putting pain medication in a glass of juice or water is not recommended, as it is difficult to determine if your child received all of the medication.

If you are unable to administer the liquid pain medication, please use the suppository pain medication prescribed. The suppositories can also be used if the liquid pain medication upsets your child's stomach. The suppositories prescribed have Tylenol in them as well as a safe narcotic. Do not give Tylenol if you are using the suppositories. Oxycodone and the pain suppositories prescribed are both pain medications and should NOT be used at the same time.

I take the prescription of pain medication very seriously, and I have partnered with two pharmacies that have experience in preparing pain medication for children. Cherry's Pharmacy in Manhattan and Modern Chemist in Brooklyn carry the pain medications I prescribe and can compound pain medication into the suppository form that I commonly prescribe for children undergoing complete or partial tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy. Most chain pharmacies do not carry oxycodone in a liquid form and do not have the experience to make the suppositories, which I find are a wonderful alternative for parents to have on hand. Cherry's Pharmacy and Modern Chemist also have a variety of flavors, which they can use to make both the antibiotics prescribed and the pain medication easier to administer. I realize that using your local pharmacy is more convenient but my primary goal is to use a pharmacy that I have confidence will partner with you and I to provide safe, effective and palatable medication for your child. Please contact Cherry's Pharmacy in Manhattan (212-717-7797) or Modern Chemist in Brooklyn (718-369-6100) to register your child prior to surgery.

Please contact my office if you have any questions regarding your child's prescription.