

Pain Management

After surgery, you will be in pain. Pain is a normal part of your healing process and is typically caused by inflammation, soft tissue healing, muscle spasm and bone pain. This discomfort can last several days to weeks and can vary based on activity level.

Taking Pain Medication

Pain medications are used as an aide to ease some of your pain. While you are hospitalized, nursing will give you medication based on your level of pain, according to a numeric scale of 0-10 for mild, moderate or severe pain. Keep in mind that it takes pain medications approximately 30-45 minutes to reach their full effect, so before your physical or occupation therapy, we encourage you to take pain medication.

For most patients', opioids, which work by blocking pain receptors in the brain and spinal cord, are the most effective way to manage post-operative pain. Many other medications, including over-the-counter, herbal and dietary supplements may interact with pain medications. Let your healthcare provider know all the medications you are currently taking, including if you are taking any medications for Substance Use Disorder.

Side Effects of Opioid Pain Medication

Common side effects of pain medications, which can be managed, include: constipation, nausea, sedation, anxiety, nervousness, night sweats, itchiness, vivid dreams, and urinary retention.

Other Ways to Manage Pain

Other non-opioid medications and/or interventions, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), ice therapy and/or use of relaxation techniques are also used to help manage your pain.

Transitioning from the Hospital to Home

It is very important for you to take your pain medication exactly as prescribed to prevent tolerance: the need to take larger doses to achieve the same effect over time; dependence: the craving of medication necessary to function normally and reduce withdrawal symptoms. Physical tolerance is unusual in a patient using opioids for a short period of time. Taking high doses of opioids over a long period of time increases the risk of becoming tolerant and/or dependent. Talk to your healthcare provider about how long you should be on pain medication.

Before you leave the hospital, you will be given a pain management plan that will provide more specific information for your review. Always ask a member of your care team if you have any questions.