



PAIN RELIEF

Good pain relief following surgery is important for your comfort and allows you to participate fully in your rehabilitation. It is often not possible to be completely pain free, so your aim is to be able to sleep and rest comfortably and exercise within a tolerable amount of pain.

Pain relief is more effective when used preventively, ie used to keep pain away rather than decrease the pain once it is there.

The first step to effective pain control happens while you are still in surgery. You may wake up having had local anaesthetic applied to your operative site. This should give you effective pain relief for the first day, and while you are in hospital the nursing staff will assist you.

When you are discharged home you will be responsible for controlling your pain. Here are a few tips to help you.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Rest and Elevation. A balance of exercise and rest post operatively is important, and sometimes pain can be a good guide of that. Elevating the limb above your heart will assist in the venous flow and therefore reduce swelling in that limb.
2. Icing the area can decrease the inflammatory response and decrease your need for stronger pain medications. Place an ice pack over the effected area for 20 mins and then off for 40 mins; repeat every hour or two as able, for at least the first couple of days, but continue for as long as it is helpful.
3. Medications. An effective approach to pain medications is the step ladder approach. That means starting at paracetamol, (not a strong pain relieving drug in itself, but when used in combination with others reduces the requirement of the stronger drugs) and stepping up the ladder as required. The next step up the ladder would be use of oxycontin followed by endone for breakthrough pain.

PARACETAMOL (panadol, panamax)

It is the first step on the pain relief ladder. It should be the first medication that you start taking and the last pain reliever you cease. When used regularly it will reduce your need for the stronger narcotic medications and has the least chance of causing side effects.

You are to take these as per the box instructions and not exceed 4gms in one day. Take care when taking other over the counter pain relievers as these may also contain paracetamol.

OXYCONTIN (oxycodone slow release)

This is a narcotic medication and the next step up the pain relief ladder. It is designed to be taken regularly and provides a slow release of the medication to ensure a steady control of your post op pain. It is usually prescribed for morning and night to provide good control of your pain. It is likely you were already receiving this tablet while you were still in hospital.

Side effects of Oxycontin: this medication can make you feel drowsy, it may make you feel dizzy when you first stand up, make you feel nauseated, itchy or become constipated. Let us know if you are having unwanted side effects from your medications as we may be able to adjust your dosage or assist you in some way. You can counteract the constipating effects by making sure you continue to have regular drinks of water and ensure some fibre in your diet.

ENDONE/OXYNORM (oxycodone rapid release)

If your pain is worsening (particularly in the early stages post operatively) you can supplement your oxycontin with endone. This is a strong narcotic medication. It is designed to be used as an “as needed” medication and is the top rung in your pain medication ladder. Be aware it has similar side effects to oxycontin.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES (Meloxicam, Celecoxib, Ibuprofen, Asprin)

If you have not been prescribed anti-inflammatories by us **please check before taking them.** They can effect your tendency to bleed and effect your healing after surgery.

If you are prescribed anti-inflammatory medications please ensure you take these on a full stomach and continue to have adequate amounts of fluids. Heartburn or indigestion can be adverse symptoms of these drugs, contact your doctor if you experience this.

As time goes by your need for medication will get less and less and you can certainly stop these drugs as you are able. Please store and dispose of your medications responsibly.

CONTACT DETAILS

- a. Normal working hours call Dr. Price's rooms on 4728 8500.
- b. After hours call the Mater Hospital switchboard on 4727 4444 or the Orthopaedic ward at the Mater on 4727 4443.
- c. Call your G.P. if the above fails.