

Patient *education*

Preoperative and Postoperative Pain Relief

Relieving pain before surgery (*preoperative*) is important because it lessens pain that you have after surgery (*postoperative*). Patients who receive pain relief both before and after surgery experience greater pain relief than those who receive pain relief only after surgery.

Let your health care provider know if you are having uncontrolled pain. This is very important. You have the right to assessment and management of pain. Pain after surgery is more difficult to manage if it is severe, so receiving prompt and adequate treatment of acute pain is necessary.

Severe pain after surgery — and the fear or anxiety associated with that pain — may cause extreme discomfort that:

- Prevents sleep.
- Decreases the ability to breathe deeply and to cough, which can lead to pneumonia or other upper airway infections.
- Causes the heart to beat more quickly and blood pressure to be higher.
- Increases the risk for constipation and bloating.
- Decreases the ability of wounds to heal.
- May result in depression, increased anxiety, and feelings of helplessness.

If you have questions, problems, or concerns about the pain that you may feel after surgery, let your health care provider know.

Pain control method

Your health care providers follow policies and procedures about the management of your pain. We will explain these guidelines to you before surgery. You and your health care provider must decide on a plan for post-surgery pain control, and we want you to understand and agree to it.

You should always feel free to ask questions about the care you're receiving.

Your health care provider attempts to control your pain in different ways, and several methods may be used together. This approach has benefits for you, including being able to eat, move around, and leave the hospital sooner.

If you become constipated after taking pain medicine, drink more liquids if you can. Your health care provider may give you a mild laxative.

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As-needed pain control

Let your health care provider know when you have pain, and he or she can give you the prescribed pain medicine.

- Medicine may be given through an IV tube, or as a pill or liquid that you can swallow.
- Tell your health care provider if you're:
 - Having too much pain.
 - Feeling too sleepy or nauseous.

Medicine that numbs the area (*local anesthetic*)

You may be given pain medicine as an injection near:

- The area of the pain.
- The nerve that controls the sensation to a specific part of your body.

Opioids

Opioids are narcotic pain medicine that is often combined with non-narcotic medicines to improve pain relief and lower the risk of side effects. Opioids are given for short periods of time in small doses to reduce any risk of addiction.

If you are concerned about opioid addiction, talk to your health care provider.

Other methods of pain control

Ask your health care provider about other ways to manage pain that don't involve medication.

These include:

- Repositioning
- Relaxation through guided imagery
- Music
- Meditation

This information doesn't replace advice from your health care provider. Discuss any questions you have with your doctor or health care team.

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