

Managing Your Pain After Surgery



Soon, you will have surgery. Because the skin has to be cut, most people have at least some pain after surgery. If you have pain, we will keep you as comfortable as we can, but no medicine will take away all of your pain.

There are many treatments we can try to treat your pain. All treatments work in different ways. Your doctor will work with you to find the best option.

Some options to treat pain are the use of medicine, early activity and non-medicine options.

What do you need to know?

1

Will I be too sore to move after surgery?

- ▶ Movement is one of the best ways to treat pain. Early and frequent movement after surgery will help you heal faster.

2

What kind of medicine will my doctor tell me to take?

- ▶ There is more than one type of pain medicine you may take. Some are called “**non-opioids**” while others are called “**opioids**.”

3

What is the difference between a non-opioid and an opioid?

- ▶ **Non-opioids** are medicines like aspirin, ibuprofen or Tylenol®. Research shows that most people get the best pain relief from a mixture of these medicines.
- ▶ **Opioids** are strong pain medicines that require a prescription, and are taken for a very short time. Opioids work well to reduce pain, but we want to make sure we keep you safe if you take them.

4

What can I expect if my doctor tells me to take an opioid?

- ▶ Your doctor may have you take an opioid for the first few days after surgery. Then, you may take a non-opioid for any pain you still have.
- ▶ If you take too many opioids or for too long, you might misuse or even abuse them. Plus, you may have:
 - ▶ nausea and confusion
 - ▶ trouble breathing when asleep
 - ▶ constipation

Your health care team will help you learn more about your pain.