

PAIN RELIEF AFTER SURGERY

- Remember: Pain is part of the **normal** healing process after surgery.
- The pain will improve day-by-day.
- To get the work done we have to cut through healthy tissue. Your body needs time to heal.
- The first few days are the worst. Things will continue to heal and improve the entire next year.
- If you're not sure about your pain level, check with your surgeon for reassurance and to rule out a rare problem.
- The evidence is strong: the best pain reliever is **peace of mind**. So check on any concerns, then settle in as your body makes its way through the healing process.

Getting comfortable

Try one or more of the following:

- Try to take as little opioid pain medication as possible (e.g. oxycodone, hydrocodone).
- If there is no acetaminophen in the opioid pills, add acetaminophen (Tylenol) – either 2 extra strength every 6 hours around the clock or 2 regular strength every four hours around the clock for two days. Don't take more than 4 grams (4000 milligrams) of acetaminophen in a day.
- Add ibuprofen 600 or 800 mg (3 or 4 over the counter pills) every 6 hours around the clock for two days. According to current best evidence, this is safe for your bones.
- Stagger the Tylenol and ibuprofen so that you're taking one or the other every three hours.
- Elevate the surgical area
- Apply ice (bag of ice wrapped in a towel or pillowcase; 20 minutes icing at least every 2 hours)

If you had a nerve block:

- When your block is wearing off, you might feel like you need to "catch up": You can take the stronger pain reliever every three hours for the next three doses.

When should I get concerned?

- Pain makes us wonder if everything is OK
- Problems after surgery are uncommon. Your surgeon can tell you what to look for.
- If you think you might have a problem, call the office to connect with the team.