

### Managing Pain after Orthopaedic Surgery Fact Sheet

After orthopaedic surgery, your doctor will make every effort to control your pain, however you should expect to feel some discomfort. This information sheet is to provide some general advice regarding the post-operative period prior to review by your surgeon.

Many types of medicines are available to help control pain, including opioids, simple analgesics, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Treating pain with medications can help you feel more comfortable, which will help your body heal and recover from surgery faster. So don't feel you need to 'tough it out'. When you feel less pain, you can start moving sooner and get your strength back more quickly.

Unless otherwise instructed, simple analgesia e.g. Paracetamol and NSAIDs are preferred to more powerful analgesics. Both paracetamol and NSAIDs are effective when it comes to relieving mild to moderate pain. They both relieve pain but work in different ways.

The key to successful pain relief is taking it before it is required (pre-emptive) and regularly in the first days postop. It is also ideal to take a small amount of several safe pain killers (multimodal). It is generally safe for an adult to take 2 standard Paracetamol every four hours **not exceeding 8 tablets in a day** and 2 standard NSAIDs e.g. Ibuprofen, Advil or Neurofen, every 6 hours, **not exceeding 6 tabs in a day**.

If breakthrough pain is a problem, analgesics such as Targin, Panadeine Forte, or Endone may be prescribed.

Example of Medication Regime:

7:00a.m. – 2 NSAIDs with breakfast

9:00a.m. – 2 Panadol/ Targin

1:00p.m. - 2 NSAIDs and 2 Panadol with lunch

5:00p.m. – 2 Panadol

7:00p.m. – 2NSAIDs with dinner

9:00p.m. – 2 Panadol **or** if required stronger pain killers e.g. Panadeine Forte and Targin or Endone.

After the acute phase of post-operative period has passed you may be comfortable on medications such as Panadol Osteo or Maxi Gesic to be taken as per instructions.

Constipation is often a side effect of taking frequent pain medication. This may be overcome by changing lifestyle e.g. increased fluid intake or increase fibre intake or by taking laxatives. A combination of the two may be needed to return to a more comfortable bowel habit.