

Post-Surgical Procedure

Pain Management: What Everyone Should Know . . .

We want to make your stay as comfortable as possible. Both drugs and non-drug treatment can be helpful in preventing and controlling pain. Everyone's pain is different, so please let us know about any pain or discomfort you are experiencing.

Tobacco Free

The Naval Health Clinic Cherry Point is tobacco-free. If you use tobacco, we will talk to you about the support we can give you.

For helpful information about quitting:

Please contact the Tobacco Cessation Facilitator at 466-0277.

Visit: www.ucanquit2.org or the Tobacco Cessation link on our homepage
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/cpoint/HP/Pages/TobaccoCessation.aspx>

The Pain Bill of Rights:

You have the right to have your report of pain taken seriously and to be treated with dignity and respect by doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals.

- You have the right to have your pain assessed and reassessed regularly and your treatment adjusted if your pain has not eased.
- You have the right to actively participate in decisions about how to manage your pain.

Pain medicine:

You may be given medicine to take at home to eliminate or decrease pain. Your caregiver will tell you how much to take and how often to take it. Take the medicine exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not wait until the pain is too bad before taking your medicine. The medicine may not work as well at controlling your pain if you wait too long to take it. Tell caregivers if the pain medicine does not help, or if your pain comes back too soon.

Hints for success:

- Taking the medicine regularly, as prescribed will usually give the most continuous pain relief.
- Take your medicine with food and water to avoid nausea.
- Increase foods naturally high in water and fiber to ease symptoms of constipation.

Post-operative pain treatment:

- **Rest:** You need extra rest to recover from the physical and emotional stress of your surgery to insure optimal healing
- **Ice:** Ice packs, both commercial and simple bags of ice are very helpful to reduce pain and swelling following surgery. Place a cloth against the skin area, or over the bandage to be iced. Apply ice continuously for 15-20 minutes, but never for greater than 30 minutes. You may repeat this process once your skin temperature has returned to normal. A loose cloth wrap can help to hold the ice bag in position. More frequent or longer periods of icing can cause frostbite. Icing may be helpful for the first two or three days after your surgery. Never place ice directly on the skin.
- **Elevation:** Raising the affected body part at or above the level of the heart is ideal, but not always practical. Lying down will usually put you in the best position to raise your arm or legs. You may place pillows beneath your arm or leg to rest upon.
- **Circulation:** Gentle exercises can help you prevent circulation problems. You may be asked to do ankle pumps. To do ankle pumps, bend your feet toward you (use your ankles to flex) and away from you (point your feet).
- **Deep Breathing:** Deep breathing after surgery helps to expand your lungs and keep them clear. We will remind you to breathe deeply and often. This is very important for the prevention of postoperative complications. Your family members may help you remember to do this too.

Wound Care:

- When you are allowed to shower, avoid spraying water directly into your incision.
 - Do not scrub your incision, unless given instructions to do so.
 - Gently pat yourself dry, put on a clean new bandage if directed to do so.
 - Remove and change your bandages as soon as they get wet or dirty.
- You will receive specific instructions when you are discharged from the Ambulatory Procedure Unit. Your instructions will contain information specific to your surgery and surgical wound care and bandaging.
- Leave the paper wound tapes (Steri-strips) in place until told otherwise by your surgeon.**

Signs and symptoms of wound infection:

If you have a question or concern, first refer to printed Postoperative Instructions sheet given to you at discharge from the Ambulatory Procedure Unit.

Call your doctor's office or the nurse help line if any of the following should happen

- Fever, higher than 100.5 degrees F.
- Redness, heat, or excessive swelling in the wound area.
- Bleeding or drainage from the wound.
- Generalized chills.

Recovery Area

You will be taken to a recovery room until you are fully awake. Nurses and corpsmen will watch you closely for any problems. Do not get out of bed until your nurse approves. The bandages used to cover your stitches keep the area clean and dry to prevent infection.

Going Home

After your surgery you will be closely monitored. When you are ready to go home, a nurse or corpsman will give you instructions about your home care and medications. You must have a responsible adult drive you home. Expect a phone call from a nurse the day after your surgery (on Monday, if your surgery is on Friday). The nurse will ask you how you are doing. Please feel free to ask questions.

Take your medicine as directed:

Always take your medicine as directed by a doctor or pharmacist. Call your doctor if you think your medicines are not helping or if you feel you are having side effects. Do not quit taking your medicines until you discuss it with your doctor. You may resume your usual medications when you go home.

Antibiotics: This medicine is given to fight or prevent an infection caused by bacteria. Always follow the instructions carefully.

Stool softeners: Narcotic pain medicines commonly cause constipation. Talk with your surgeon before your surgery if you are prone to constipation. You may be given stool softeners to soften your bowel movements, making them easier to pass. Your pharmacist can also advise you of over-the-counter stool softeners, as an alternative.

Diet to promote recovery:

Eat a variety of healthy foods from all the food groups every day.

- Grains (whole grain bread, cereal, rice and pasta).
- Fruits and vegetables including dark green and orange vegetables and legumes (dry beans).
- Dairy products (low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese).
- Protein sources such as lean meat and poultry (chicken), fish, beans, eggs and nuts.

Your Privacy

Naval Health Clinic Cherry Point keeps all patient information private, confidential and secure. Records and patient information are only released as allowed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).