



Orthopedic Surgery • Sports Medicine
Neil Kumar, MD

Surgical Pain Medication Guide

The opioid crisis continues to be a significant public health concern which affects millions of Americans today. Medical societies of all specialties have come together to make a strong concerted effort to fight this deadly disease.

One of the most common ways patients can be exposed to opioids is the use of these medications after surgery. Your post-surgical pain is due to several different factors: pain from surgery itself, pain from inflammation, pain from nerve irritation, and pain from the psychological stress of having surgery. *No single medication can address all of these factors.* Research has shown that addressing each of these causes is the most effective in reducing pain after surgery in a safe manner. This is called a multi-modal approach to pain relief.

Dr. Kumar is dedicated to help fight the opioid crisis with the use of a multi-modal post-surgery pain relief protocol. This Guide will help you understand the various aspects of pain treatments. Your pain treatments will be determined based upon your specific surgery.

Cold Therapy/Icing

Using cold therapy/icing after surgery is one of the most effective ways to reduce pain from surgery and pain from inflammation. Cold therapy/icing should be used around the clock as directed by your Post-Surgical Instructions. Cold therapy/icing should be used immediately after surgery and continued during the weeks and months of your rehabilitation.

Tylenol and Ibuprofen

Tylenol and Ibuprofen are simple medications that can be very effective in reducing inflammation pain after surgery. These medications should be used around the clock every 4 to 6 hours. Both of these medications should be used immediately after surgery and can be continued during the weeks and months of your rehabilitation. *If you have acid reflux, stomach ulcers, or kidney disease, you should avoid Ibuprofen.*

Oxycodone

Oxycodone is a strong narcotic pain medication. It will begin to work within 15 minutes after taking it with a maximal effect in one to two hours. Narcotic medications like Oxycodone can cause nausea or an episode of vomiting. Take the medicine with a little food, start with just one pill, and be patient while the medicine begins to work. Usually, after the first few doses, the nausea goes away. If you take a full dose of this medication for more than 4 or 5 days it can lead to constipation. Normally, Oxycodone is taken every 6 hours but if the pain is severe, it can be used every 4 hours. Remember, narcotic pain medications do have addiction potential with prolonged use.

Gabapentin

Gabapentin is a medication that is used to reduce nerve irritation pain after surgery. This medication is used twice per day and should be started immediately after surgery. Gabapentin can take several hours to begin working and can make you feel drowsy and tired.