

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Stop your opioids as soon as possible after surgery.
- Opioids may make you drowsy, dizzy, light-headed, or confused. NEVER drive or operate machinery while taking opioids.
- If you are already taking other opioids, ask your doctor or pharmacist about naloxone (also known as Narcan). It could save your life in the event of an opioid overdose.
- Opioids may make you nauseous or constipated. Your doctor may prescribe a stool softener or anti-nausea medication.
- Always return unused medication to the pharmacy. For your convenience, military pharmacies have dedicated medication return bins.



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The National Capital Region Medical Directorate provides individualized, holistic, patient-centered pain care with a focus on reducing disability, increasing function, and improving the quality of life for our patients.

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY,
PLEASE DIAL 911.**



POST-OPERATION PAIN MANAGEMENT and Opioid Guide





Pain is a common side effect of surgical procedures. You will likely experience the most pain immediately following surgery, and it will decrease shortly thereafter. To help you manage the pain, we may prescribe an opioid. Please read this brochure carefully, and talk to your provider if you have any questions or concerns.

OPIOIDS

Our goal in treating post-operative pain using opioids is to promote your recovery and return to normal function. Post-operative pain that is not treated properly may result in chronic pain. The potential for addiction exists when opioids are used for more than three to five days.



BEFORE SURGERY

Tell your doctor exactly what medications and how much of each medication you are taking, especially if you are already taking opioids or benzodiazepines, including:

- Oxycodone (OxyIR, Oxycontin)
- Oxycodone with acetaminophen (Percocet)
- Hydrocodone with acetaminophen (Lortab, Vicodin)
- Tramadol (Ultram)
- Diazepam (Valium)
- Alprazolam (Xanax)
- Clonazepam (Klonopin)

For your safety, you will need to reduce or stop some of your medications before surgery.

While it may be challenging to stop or reduce any opioids you may already be taking, doing so has proven to result in shorter, easier recoveries.



You will also be instructed in both physical and behavioral techniques to help ease some of your pain. These methods may include the use of:

- Ice
- Breathing
- Movement
- Relaxation



AFTER SURGERY

DO NOT take extra doses. Opioids can cause you to stop breathing if you take too many pills! Additionally, if you take extra doses, you will run out of your pain medication too soon and you will not be able to refill your prescription early. You are also more likely to experience symptoms of withdrawal, such as agitation, nausea, diarrhea, sweating, abdominal pain, and nervousness if you do not take opioids as prescribed.

Do not drink alcohol while taking opioids.

If you have severe, increased, or new pain, do not take more of your opioids. Call your provider so the best care option can be determined.

If you are not improving as expected, we will monitor you closely and recommend alternative pain interventions to promote recovery and reduce the need for opioids.