

WAYS YOU AND YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM CAN CONTROL YOUR PAIN

Orthopedic conditions and injuries are often associated with pain. Fortunately, the pain is usually of short duration and can be managed best using multiple methods. This is referred to as multimodal pain management. The goal is to manage the pain, not to completely eliminate it. Complete elimination is virtually impossible, short of anesthesia, even using the most powerful and potentially risky drugs. Your general health will impact how well your pain is managed as well as how quickly and completely you recover from the orthopedic problem. Current or recent use of narcotic pain medications can minimize the effectiveness of narcotics prescribed for a current problem. Studies show that patient satisfaction and results are lower for those patients who are taking narcotics preoperatively. Therefore if you are currently on a narcotic, try to stop taking it prior to surgery.

The better your physical fitness, the better you will manage your orthopedic problem and the pain associated with it.

The multimodal approach for surgical patients starts prior to the actual surgery. Your surgeon and anesthesia team will likely begin certain medications or use other techniques to manage the pain even before the surgery starts.

- » For both surgical and those patients with other painful orthopedic conditions, the following multimodal approach will best manage your pain.
- » Follow instructions you have been given by the orthopedic provider. This includes activity status with respect to weight bearing, using crutches, braces, casts, or walker as instructed.
- » Rest in the early period after the onset of the problem.
- » Elevate the injured or surgically treated limb to help control swelling.

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- » Apply ice to the injured area (cover with a light towel) for 20 minutes, 3 to 4 times a day. Surgical patients, be sure to keep dressing dry.
- » Use Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or NSAID drugs such as ibuprofen, Advil, Aleve as directed by provider.
- » Narcotic medications may be necessary to help manage your pain. Pain relief is one of many effects of narcotics. Narcotics can cause depression, constipation, nausea, vomiting, depressed breathing, and itching. Therefore the least amount of this powerful drug used the better, in order to minimize the potential side effects. Prolonged use of narcotics can result in tolerance to the drug. Tolerance is when the patient requires increasing amounts of the drug to get the same effect from the drug. This can then result in a greater problem, addiction to the drug. Studies indicate that narcotics are not effective for treating chronic pain.
- » Physical Therapy can play a role in both improving your functional outcome as well as managing your pain.
- » You should not drive or operate machinery while taking narcotics.
- » Narcotic medicine renewals will not be made after hours. Please call your provider early if you anticipate needing a renewal. Please consider other modes of pain management rather than narcotics.
- » Your OrthoCarolina provider will work with you to develop a comprehensive plan to manage your entire orthopedic problem. It is a team effort, requiring your participation. You will be prescribed appropriate amounts of medication for the treatment of your expected pain. The goal is to control, not eliminate the pain with the lowest dose of narcotic for the shortest period of time. You and your provider will periodically reevaluate your progress and modify the medications. The expectation is to treat the expected pain effectively in the early period and then wean from the narcotic medication quickly in order to avoid the potentially significant complications.
- » Patients presenting to OrthoCarolina who are currently on narcotics, should not expect these medicines to be renewed unless your provider feels that this is appropriate to do. OrthoCarolina has a policy which guides our providers in responsible narcotic prescribing. Our providers are expected to adhere to this policy.
- » Dispose of unused narcotics by mixing the drug with water and kitty litter or coffee grounds, then place in a sealed bag and dispose in the trash.