

Managing pain after your day surgery procedure

Information for patients

You may need analgesics, or ‘painkillers’, to help manage your pain at home after your day surgery procedure. The type of painkillers you need will vary in strength and type, so the following information will help to ensure you take the correct tablets for any post-surgery pain you may have.

We will also go through your painkillers with you so that you understand how and when to take them.

Contacting the day surgery unit at the Royal Free Hospital

The direct line for the day surgery unit nurses is available Monday to Saturday: 020 7830 2665

Starting analgesics or ‘painkillers’

It is best for you to start taking analgesic medication or ‘painkillers’ before the local anaesthetic wears off. Your nurse will help you to decide when to start taking them. If you usually take painkillers at home, please use this opportunity to discuss this with the nurse, as these painkillers may need to be continued after your surgery.

Please ensure you have a supply of ibuprofen (a common anti-inflammatory) and paracetamol at home. Please also ensure that you have a supply of laxatives at home.

Dealing with mild to moderate pain

'Mild to moderate pain' means pain that you notice but that doesn't particularly stop you from moving around and still being comfortable. You should take the following painkillers regularly for the first one to two days after your procedure:

Paracetamol	Take 2 x 500mg tablets every 4-6 hours.	You can take up to a maximum of 8 tablets in 24 hours.
Ibuprofen	Take 2 x 200mg tablets every 4-6 hours, preferably after food.	You can take up to a maximum of 6 tablets per day. You will need to ask your doctor before you take this medication if you suffer from stomach, kidney, heart problems or suffer from asthma.

Dealing with moderate to severe pain

It is unusual to have severe pain after a day procedure, however if you have not taken the above medication on a regular basis, or if you have had a laparoscopy, hernia removal or other similar procedure, it may be more severe. 'Moderate to severe pain' means pain that may make you uncomfortable and restricts your movement.

As with 'mild to moderate pain', you should take paracetamol and ibuprofen as directed above. In addition, you will be prescribed a stronger analgesic drug. In this case it will be dihydrocodeine.

Dihydrocodeine	Take 1-2 x 30mg tablets up to a maximum of 4 times per day alongside paracetamol.	You can take up to a maximum of 8 tablets per day, however if you require that many tablets for more than 3-5 days to manage your pain and your pain is getting worse, you should contact your GP.
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Other medicines you may be given

You may also be given an anti-sickness medication should you need it. Your nurse will provide you with information about this medicine.

Side-effects

All medicines have possible side effects. The information leaflet in the medicine box will explain these further, however it is important to note that medicines such as Dihydrocodeine can cause constipation. To help manage this, make sure you drink plenty of water, eat fruit and vegetables and keep mobilising to counteract these effects. If constipation persists, and over the counter laxatives don't help, a mild laxative such as Movicol® or Lactulose® may be prescribed.

Some discomfort is expected for the first few days after your operation, so it is better to keep up your painkillers on a regular basis, as prescribed by the doctor.

If you find the painkillers are not effective, please contact your GP as soon as possible.

Always store your medicines in a cool dry place out of the reach of children.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact your GP.

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email: rf.communications@nhs.net

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please ask a member of staff.

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