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## Post Operative pain – patient education leaflet



After surgery, nearly everyone has pain. Controlling your pain is a team effort. You, your surgeon, the nurses, and other health care staff will work together to make you as comfortable as possible right after surgery.

### What kind of pain should I expect after surgery?

The pain that you may have right after surgery is called acute pain. It will decrease as your body heals. If you have pain for a longer period of time, it is called chronic pain.

### Who will manage my pain after surgery?

At different phases of your recovery, all of the doctors who take care of you will work together to control your pain. They will adjust your pain medicines as needed to give (maximum possible pain relief) the most pain relief possible.

### How will my doctor know what pain relief method is best for me?

Our doctors are highly trained in prescribing the medicine needed to manage your (post operative) pain. The pain control method and the doses are based on your sex, weight, age, diagnosis, and type of surgery (presence of other illnesses such as bronchial asthma) and a few other factors. To help your doctor determine your dose, you will be asked to rate your pain on a scale from 0 (no pain) to 10 (the worst possible pain).

### What is a realistic expectation for my pain control?

A realistic expectation is that your pain will be greatly reduced. However, you may not be completely pain-free. During your hospital stay, your nurse will regularly ask you about the pain you may be having. Your nurse will work with your doctor to adjust medicines as needed for the most relief possible (the best possible pain relief).

### What methods can be used to control my pain after surgery?

#### Pain Medicines

Whilst in hospital you may be given pain medicines into your intravenous line or as an injection. When you are able to eat and drink, you may begin taking pain medicine by mouth. You will continue taking medicine orally as you recover at home.

Keeping your pain under control is important for your well being. It will help you eat better, sleep better, and move around more easily. If your pain is under control, your visits with family and friends will be more enjoyable. Good pain relief hastens the healing process and helps you quickly get back to your normal routine.

#### Epidural Analgesia

Epidural analgesia is a combination of strong pain medicine and local anesthetic given through a tiny tube, or catheter, which is placed in your back. The tiny tube is inserted under a local anesthetic, or numbing medicine, right before or after your surgery.

Epidural catheters are widely known because they are used for women during labor and delivery. Epidurals are an effective method of pain management for patients having various operations, including but not limited to orthopaedic, abdominal, and gynecologic surgery.

If medicine does not help

If medicine does not help in reducing your pain, or if you are having side effects, please tell your doctor or nurse. Tell us if you:

- Have stomach ache, nausea, vomiting
- Feel too sleepy
- Are constipated
- Itch all over

Your doctor may order medicines that can help relieve your side effects.

### **Pain medicines are safe**

Pain medicines are safe and helpful when given by doctors and nurses. Some people worry that they will become addicted to the medicine they get for pain. But this rarely happens when these medicines are used for the relief of pain. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you are worried about this.

### **Some things make pain worse**

Pain or discomfort may be greater:

- When doing certain activities
- During the healing process

Take pain medicine before walking or exercising. The medicine can make that activity less painful and help speed your recovery.

### **Not just medicines**

Other methods beside pain medicines can help to control your pain. These may include:

- Putting heat or cold on the painful area
- Physiotherapy
- Massage therapy
- Relaxation techniques

### **Ask for help with your pain**

Some people feel that they should just put up with pain. Other people don't want to be a bother. These people tend to say nothing about pain until it is so bad they can't stand it. This is not a good idea. When pain becomes this bad, it is much harder to control. If you get pain relief before the pain reaches this point, it will take less medicine to make you feel better. We want you to be as comfortable as possible. The nurses will give you pain medicine as soon as possible after you ask for it. Several times each day, our staff will ask if you have pain and how bad it is. But you don't have to wait to be asked. If you need help for pain, tell the nurse right away. Use the call button if you have one.

### **Tell us about your pain**

To help speed your recovery, we ask that you think about your level of pain. The doctors and nurses count on you to tell them how bad the pain is. We cannot measure pain with a test. Instead we will ask that you tell us about your pain in the following way.

### **Wong-Baker FACES Pain Rating Scale**

With this scale, each face is for a person who feels happy because he has no pain, or sad because he has some pain or a lot of pain. Face 2 hurts just a little bit. Face 4 hurts a little bit more. Face 6 hurts even more. Face 8 hurts a whole lot. Face 10 hurts as much as you can imagine, but you don't have to be crying to feel this bad. The doctor or nurse will ask you to choose the face that shows how you are feeling.

*Wong-Baker FACES Pain Rating Scale\**



**0**  
no hurt



**2**  
hurts  
little bit



**4**  
hurts  
little more



**6**  
hurts  
even more



**8**  
hurts  
whole lot



**10**  
hurts  
worst