



Managing Your Child's Pain After Surgery Without Opioids

For Pediatric Patients Participating in the Michigan Pain-Control Optimization Pathway for Tonsillectomy(MPOP)

Thank you for participating in our program to help patients and their families manage their pain after surgery without opioids. This is part of our effort to provide your child with the best care possible, without exposing your child or your family to the risk that opioids pose.

What pain can I expect for my child after surgery?

You can expect your child to have throat, ear, and neck pain after surgery. This is normal. It usually lasts 7-10 days and can last up to 2 weeks. It is often worse in the mornings. It is common for the pain to worsen several days after surgery from inflammation.

We recently conducted a study that found many patients are able to manage their pain after surgery with Over-the-Counter (OTC) medications such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Motrin or Advil (ibuprofen). If your child has a condition that does not allow them to take these medications, notify your child's surgical team.

How will I manage my child's pain?

The best strategy for controlling your child's pain after surgery is around the clock pain control with Tylenol and Motrin. **Around the clock** means that you will wake your child at night to give them these medications. You may choose to **alternate** these medications by giving one or the other every 3 hours or **give them together** every 6 hours. In addition to Tylenol and Motrin, make sure your child is drinking lots of fluids, chewing, and eating. Special foods such as ice cream, popsicles, pudding, and yogurt can help with pain control and distraction. You can also use other distraction techniques to manage your child's pain. These include spending time with them, playing or doing special

projects, allowing them to watch their favorite shows or movies, and using a cold or warm pack on their neck.

How might I *alternate* Motrin and Tylenol around the clock?

You will give a dose of either Tylenol or Motrin every 3 hours on an alternating schedule. Use the dose listed in your child’s discharge paperwork and ask your nurse when to start this pain regimen.

- Start by giving Motrin
- 3 hours later, give Tylenol
- 3 hours after giving the Tylenol, give Motrin
- 3 hours after that give Tylenol

See example below. In this scenario, the first dose of Motrin is at 3:00 PM. The first dose and the time at which your child takes it may differ.

3:00 PM	Motrin
6:00 PM	Tylenol
9:00 PM	Motrin
12:00 AM	Tylenol
3:00 AM	Motrin
Continue alternating Motrin and Tylenol every 3 hours for at least 48 hours (2 days) after surgery	

How might I give Motrin and Tylenol *together* around the clock?

You will give doses of Tylenol or Motrin together every 6 hours. Use the dose listed in your child’s discharge paperwork and ask your nurse when to start this pain regimen.

- Start by giving Motrin and Tylenol together
- 6 hours later give Motrin and Tylenol together
- 6 hours later give Motrin and Tylenol together

See example – where the first dose of Motrin and Tylenol is at 3:00 PM. Again, your child’s first dose and the time at which they take it may differ.

3:00 PM	Motrin and Tylenol
9:00 PM	Motrin and Tylenol
3:00 AM	Motrin and Tylenol
Continue giving Motrin and Tylenol together every 6 hours for at least 48 hours (2 days) after surgery	

Use the table on the last page of this handout to keep track of the medications you are giving your child. After 48 hours, you may need to keep using these medications on a schedule during the day, but you may not need to wake your child at night to give them the medication. Ask your child if they are in pain at least every 6 hours and assess whether they need the medication.

Important:

Do not give Tylenol or Motrin more often or in higher doses than recommended. If you have questions on how much is safe to give, ask your surgical team or pharmacist.

What if my child still has pain?

If your child has pain that is not controlled with the over-the-counter pain medications (Tylenol and Motrin), they might have what we call “breakthrough” pain. This may happen if your child falls behind on their pain regimen or is not drinking adequately. Try offering liquids or foods, distraction techniques, or cold or heating pads to the neck.

You have been given a small amount of an opioid pain medication (oxycodone). If your child still has uncontrolled pain despite Motrin, Tylenol, distraction techniques, and drinking liquids, you can use the oxycodone. Do **not** use oxycodone to prevent pain or help them sleep, as this can cause overdose and breathing problems. Continue to use the Motrin, Tylenol, distraction techniques, and liquids even if you are giving the oxycodone.

If your child is still having uncontrolled pain after using all of the opioid medication prescribed, don't hesitate to call our staff using the number provided. We will help make sure you are managing your child's pain in the best way possible.

Day 1				
Time	Name of Pain Medication	Number of milliliters given	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				

Day 2				
Time	Name of Pain Medication	Number of milliliters given	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				

Day 3				
Time	Name of Pain Medication	Number of milliliters given	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				

Day 4				
Time	Name of Pain Medication	Number of milliliters given	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				

Day 5				
Time	Name of Pain Medication	Number of milliliters given	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				

Day 6				
Time	Name of Pain Medication	Number of milliliters given	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				

Day 7				
Time	Name of Pain Medication	Number of milliliters given	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				
AM PM				

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