



**MICHIGAN MEDICINE**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# Managing Your Pain After Surgery Without Opioids

For patients participating in the Michigan Pain-  
Control Optimization Pathway (MPOP)

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

## What pain can I expect after surgery?

You can expect to have some pain after surgery. This is normal. The pain is typically worse the day after surgery, and quickly begins to get better.

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 and Motrin. If you have a condition that does not allow you to take Tylenol or Motrin, notify your surgical team.

## How will I manage my pain?

The best strategy for controlling your pain after surgery is **around the clock** pain control with Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Motrin (ibuprofen or Advil). **Alternating** these medications with each other allows you to maximize your pain control. In addition to Tylenol and Motrin, you can use heating pads or ice packs on your incisions to help reduce your pain.

## How will I alternate your regular strength over-the-counter pain medication?

You will take a dose of pain medication every three hours.

- Start by taking 650 mg of Tylenol (2 pills of 325 mg)
- 3 hours later take 600 mg of Motrin (3 pills of 200 mg)
- 3 hours after taking the Motrin take 650 mg of Tylenol
- 3 hours after that take 600 mg of Motrin.

See example - if your first dose of Tylenol is at 12:00 PM

12:00 PM	Tylenol 650 mg (2 pills of 325 mg)
3:00 PM	Motrin 600 mg (3 pills of 200 mg)
6:00 PM	Tylenol 650 mg (2 pills of 325 mg)
9:00 PM	Motrin 600 mg (3 pills of 200 mg)
Continue alternating every 3 hours	

We recommend that you follow this schedule around-the-clock for at least 3 days after surgery, or until you feel that it is no longer needed. Use the table on the last page of this handout to keep track of the medications you are taking.

### **Important:**

**Do not** take more than 3000mg of Tylenol or 3200mg of Motrin in a 24-hour period.

### **What if I still have pain?**

If you have pain that is not controlled with the over-the-counter pain medications (Tylenol and Motrin or Advil) you might have what we call “breakthrough” pain. You will receive a prescription for a small amount of an opioid pain medication such as Oxycodone, Tramadol, or Tylenol with Codeine. Use these opioid pills in the first 24 hours after surgery if you have breakthrough pain. **Do not take more than 1 pill every 4-6 hours.**

If you still have uncontrolled pain after using all opioid pills, don’t hesitate to call our staff using the number provided. We will help make sure you are managing your pain in the best way possible, and if necessary, we can provide a prescription for additional pain medication.

<b>Day 1</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Acetaminophen</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					

Total Daily amount of Acetaminophen  
**Do not take more than 3,000 mg per day**

<b>Day 2</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Acetaminophen</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					

Total Daily amount of Acetaminophen  
**Do not take more than 3,000 mg per day**

<b>Day 3</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Acetaminophen</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					

AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					

Total Daily amount of Acetaminophen  
**Do not take more than 3,000 mg per day**

**Day 4**

Time	Name of Medication	Number of pills taken	Amount of Acetaminophen	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					

Total Daily amount of Acetaminophen  
**Do not take more than 3,000 mg per day**

**Day 5**

Time	Name of Medication	Number of pills taken	Amount of Acetaminophen	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					

Total Daily amount of Acetaminophen  
**Do not take more than 3,000 mg per day**

<b>Day 6</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Acetaminophen</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
Total Daily amount of Acetaminophen Do not take more than 3,000 mg per day					

<b>Day 7</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Acetaminophen</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
Total Daily amount of Acetaminophen Do not take more than 3,000 mg per day					

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