

# Pain Control After Your Surgery

## Important information for people taking opioid pain medications

---

Congratulations on taking the first step toward surgery at the University of Michigan. We have an experienced team of doctors to help you through your upcoming surgery. Our primary concern is your safety and comfort.

We know that many patients deal with significant pain. It is common for patients who need elective surgery to be taking opioid-based pain medication. However, **these medications may make it harder to safely control pain after surgery**. Your surgical and anesthesia teams believe that it is important to minimize your use of pain medication before surgery whenever possible.

### **Why do I need to take less pain medication before I have surgery?**

- Over time, people who take pain medications become **more** sensitive to pain. This makes it hard to control pain from surgery. Lowering your dose now will make you more comfortable after surgery.
- Many patients need pain medication for surgical pain. If you are already on a high dose of pain medication, adding more might lead to breathing problems and even death.
- When you have a high level of pain medication in your body, adding more may not improve your pain and may be dangerous.

### **How can I minimize my opioid dose?**

You and your doctor can work together to come up with a plan to adjust your pain medication. You can also learn about other ways to manage your pain. Schedule a visit with your prescribing doctor as soon as possible so they can

help you adjust your pain medication to a safe level. Your prescribing doctor can find more information at

<http://anes-conf.med.umich.edu/opioidtaper/>

Adjusting your dose now will help you have a safer and more comfortable surgery. It will also **prevent delay of your operation.**

We need your help to make your surgery as safe and comfortable as possible. We look forward to caring for you before, during and after your upcoming surgery

### **Where can I learn more?**

For more information on managing chronic pain, visit the American Chronic Pain Association website: <https://theacpa.org/>

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 12/2016