

## Pain Relief after Your Operation

**This information has been written to help you to:**

- Relieve pain after your operation.
- Choose which pain killers to buy before you come into hospital for your operation.
- Know how to take your tablets most effectively.
- Know what side effects to look out for.

Most people will experience pain after an operation. This can usually be relieved by a combination of simple measures and pain killers:

- Relaxation - pain is reduced when you are relaxed and distracted. Resting in a comfortable chair watching TV, listening to music or reading is helpful.
- Positioning - rest in a comfortable position with pillows to raise your arm/s or leg/s if they have been operated on.
- Pain relief - simple pain relieving tablets that can be bought from a chemist or a supermarket are effective. They should be taken before pain becomes severe and repeated regularly.
- If pain is not controlled with one type of pain relieving tablet e.g. Paracetamol, a different type such as Ibuprofen can be taken as well, if this is safe for you to use. This combination is more effective than either tablet alone.
- If the pain persists despite taking pain killers ring the contact number you have been given for advice or contact your GP.

**Before you come to hospital please buy some pain relief:**

Which tablets should you buy?

For minor operations Paracetamol **or** Ibuprofen, if this is safe for you to use, will probably be adequate. For other operations Paracetamol **and either** Ibuprofen or codeine together will provide stronger pain relief.

Please note that generic drugs work in the same way as branded versions i.e. Paracetamol is the same as Panadol ®. Generic drugs will in most cases be cheaper to buy.

**When you come to hospital please bring your pain killers with you:**

In the original packets, including the drug information leaflets.

### **How to take your pain killers:**

**Paracetamol** 500 mg tablets - take 2 tablets every 6 hours and do not take more than 8 tablets in 24 hours. Taking tablets regularly is more effective than waiting until the pain becomes worse. Side effects from Paracetamol are uncommon.

**Ibuprofen** 200mg or 400 mg tablets - take two 200mg tablets or one 400mg tablet every 8 hours. This is an anti-inflammatory pain relief drug.

The tablets should be taken with food (at meal times is ideal). These tablets may cause stomach irritation. If you experience severe indigestion stop taking these tablets. If you have asthma which is triggered by ibuprofen or similar drugs, you have renal problems or take other medication which means you cannot take ibuprofen or similar drugs, do not take these drugs.

**Paracetamol products that contain Codeine or Dihydrocodeine** - some products that you can buy at the chemist or supermarket may contain Codeine or Dihydrocodeine in combination with Paracetamol. **Do not take additional Paracetamol as well as these tablets.**

Codeine can cause drowsiness, dizziness, sickness or constipation. You should not drive or drink alcohol while you are taking Codeine. To avoid constipation drink plenty of water or fruit juice and eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.

### **Additional information:**

- Always read dosage instructions carefully.
- Do not exceed the stated dose.

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