

## Pain Medications:

You may have been prescribed an opioid-containing pain medication. To decrease the need for opioid-containing medications, plan to alternate the following over-the-counter pain medications:

- Acetaminophen (also known as Tylenol)
  - Do not take with alcohol or if you have liver disease.
  - **Do not take more than 4000 mg daily.**
- Ibuprofen (also known as Motrin, Advil)
  - Do not take if you are taking aspirin or another blood thinner, have kidney disease, if you are pregnant, have a stomach infection, history of peptic ulcers, history of gastrointestinal bleeding, or if you have had a CABG (coronary artery bypass grafting) surgery.
  - **Do not take more than 3200 mg daily.**

## Plan:

Start by taking acetaminophen. Then, take ibuprofen three (3) hours later. Take acetaminophen again three (3) hours after taking the ibuprofen. Take ibuprofen again three (3) hours after taking the acetaminophen. Repeat schedule as needed.

## Example Schedule:

9:00 AM	Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 650 mg (2 pills of 325 mg)
12:00 PM	Ibuprofen (Motrin) 600 mg (3 pills of 200 mg)
3:00 PM	Acetaminophen 650 mg (2 pills of 325 mg)
6:00 PM	Ibuprofen 600 mg (3 pills of 200 mg)
Continue to repeat this schedule every 3 hours for the first 2 days, then every 3 hours as needed	

If you continue to have pain while following this schedule, you may take one of your opioid-containing pain medications. **Beware that some common opioid-containing medications, such as Norco, Vicodin, Lortab, and Percocet, also contain 325 mg of acetaminophen in each pill.** Read your prescription bottle carefully. You may take these in addition to your regularly scheduled acetaminophen and ibuprofen, keeping in mind not to take more than the total acetaminophen limit of 4000 mg per day.

## What if I had a nerve block?

If you had a nerve block for your surgery, your arm or fingers will be numb immediately after surgery and you will likely have little to no pain. To not fall behind on your pain control, start the schedule of alternating acetaminophen and ibuprofen **BEFORE** you begin to feel pain and the block wearing off. If it is bedtime and your arm or fingers are still numb, take pain medication before you go to sleep and resume the schedule when you wake up.

## What if I cannot take either acetaminophen or ibuprofen?

If you cannot take one of these medications, then plan to keep the above schedule while skipping the medication you cannot take.