

# Pain Relief Strategies

## Education

Pain comes from many sources after surgery and has different causes. Here are some types of pain you may experience after orthopaedic surgery.

*Incisional Pain* – this pain is localized to the area where the surgery was done. It usually begins to decrease about 12 to 24 hours after surgery.

*Pain from Swelling* – orthopaedic surgery often results in swelling which causes pressure and results in pain. This pain decreases when the swelling goes away.

*Muscle Pain* – your surgery may cause temporary muscle spasm around the surgical site. Your muscles will gradually adjust to the changes caused by surgery but anything you can do to help the muscles relax will reduce the spasm.

*Nerve Pain* – some patients may experience nerve pain which is caused by stretching, swelling or pressure on the nerves. Nerve pain is like a toothache and will gradually improve when the nerve calms down.

## Teamwork

Finding the best strategies for your pain means we need your participation in the pain management plan.

## Understanding

Everyone experiences pain differently but the goal of pain management is always the same: reduce your pain so that you may experience a safe, successful and quick recovery from your surgery.

Here are some of the benefits of good pain management:

- Less pain means less stress on your body.
- Your body heals better with less stress.
- You can breathe deeply, cough and move more easily if you have less pain.
- If you are more active after surgery, you reduce your risks of infection, lung problems, muscle spasm or heart attack.

## Communication

It is important to tell us if you are having pain.

You will frequently be asked to rate your pain on a scale from 0 to 10.

0 = no pain

10 = the worst pain you can imagine



It is important to communicate early about your pain (when the pain starts) so we can quickly begin the appropriate pain strategies.

Since pain medicine may take 10 to 40 minutes to work, plan to ask for pain medication before physical therapy, before breathing exercises and before activities like turning in bed or going home.