



Helping Pain after Surgery

After any surgery your child may be in pain. Pain can be caused by the cuts made in the skin, swelling, the tube in their throat during surgery, and many other reasons. The doctors and nurses at the hospital want to make sure that the pain does not get too bad. There are many ways to help your pain but it is not always possible to take all of the pain away.

Are there ways I can help my child's pain without taking medicine?

There are ways to make your child think of other things instead of the pain. Listening to music, reading, watching TV, having a favorite toy, and using their imagination to help children think of calming images. You can also help your child to use positive thoughts like "I can do this", or "I know it will get better."

Other things like deep breathing, relaxation (like tensing and then relaxing muscles), and changing positions can help lessen pain.

Holding, cuddling and massage are also great ways to comfort your child after surgery. These medicine-free techniques can reduce pain, improve a patient's sense of control, and lessen feelings of stress and worry that can come after surgery.

What medicines can help my child's pain after a surgery?

Acetaminophen (TYLENOL) and **ibuprofen (MOTRIN/ADVIL)** are two over-the counter medicines that can be used for pain in children. Children take these medicines easily and have very few side effects. Both medicines are available in liquid, chewable and tablet form.

The doctor and nurses will give you directions on which medicines to use for pain. The amount of pain medicine that you will give your child is figured out by using your child's weight. Please follow your doctor's instructions on how much medicine to give. The doctor might want you to use one medicine only or the doctor may want you to alternate both medicines. The doctor or nurse will tell you how often you can give the medication. You might want to write down the medicine and the times you gave the medicine on a piece of paper to make sure you are giving it the right way. It is important to give the medicine on a regular schedule so that your child doesn't have too much pain at one time. Don't wait until your child complains of severe pain before you give them medicine.

Never use aspirin to treat pain in children.

Your child's doctor may order stronger pain medicine to be given in addition to over the counter (OTC) medicines. These prescription medicines are called **opioids**. Some common ones are **Hydrocodone** and **Oxycodone**.

What are the safety concerns when taking opioid medicines?

Safety is a huge concern when giving these medicines to children. **They should be kept out of a child's reach, in a safe and locked place.** Please follow the doctor's directions on the medicine bottle so you do not give your child too much medicine.

This medicine should be taken for **severe pain**, after your child has already tried acetaminophen or ibuprofen and is still having a lot of pain. Don't give this type of medicine to your child if they are very sleepy or cannot wake up easily.

Don't give your child Acetaminophen (TYLENOL) if their opioid pain medicine already has Acetaminophen in it! These include: Acetaminophen/Hydrocodone (LORTAB/NORCO/VICODIN) or Acetaminophen/Oxycodone (PERCOCET).

What are possible side effects of opioid medicines?

An adult should supervise your child at all times if they are taking any medicine. Opioid medicine can make children dizzy and sleepy. Children taking opioid medicines shouldn't do activities that they need to think about like riding a bike or skateboard, using a trampoline, mowing the lawn, or driving a car. Itching and upset stomach are common side effects of opioid medicines. The itching doesn't mean the child is allergic to the medicine.

To lower the risk of having an upset stomach, it is best if your child takes the medicine with food.

Opioids can make it hard for children to poop. Having your child drink fruit juices and water and eat fruits and vegetable will help keep the poop soft and easier to get out. Call your doctor if your child is having trouble pooping after surgery.

How do I safely throw away opioid medicine?

When your child no longer needs opioid medicine for pain, you should throw away any leftover medicine. It is best to take the left over medicine to a "medicine take-back" program near your home to be thrown away. If this is not possible, please flush the medicine down the toilet.

When should I call my child's doctor?

Call your child's doctor if your child is having:

- Very bad pain and medicine is not making it better.
- Severe stomach ache, vomiting, itching, or cannot poop.
- A rash on their body

Call 911 you cannot wake up your child or if they are having trouble breathing.

Use This Chart to Keep Track of When You Gave Your Child their Medicine

<u>Medicine</u> <u>Name</u>	Time given	Time given	Time given	Time given	Time given	Time given	Time given	Time given	Time given	Time given	Time given