



Opioids for pain after day surgery: Your questions answered



1. Changes?

Opioid and non-opioids have been prescribed for you to treat pain after surgery. Opioids (such as morphine) are generally used to treat severe pain. Non-opioids (such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen) are used to treat mild to moderate pain. Both can be used together to manage your pain. Other methods that can be combined to reduce pain include using ice, relaxation techniques, etc. Ask about which options are best for you to treat pain. Know your pain control plan.



2. Continue?

Opioids are usually required for less than 1 week. As you continue to recover from your surgery, your pain should get better day by day. As you get better, you will need less opioid and non-opioid pain medication.



3. Proper Use?

Use the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time. It will take 30 to 60 minutes for the pain medication pill to start working. Do not drive a car while taking opioids. Avoid alcohol and sleeping pills (e.g. benzodiazepines like lorazepam) while taking opioids. Overdose and addiction can occur with opioids.



4. Monitor?

Side effects of opioids include: drowsiness, constipation, nausea, vomiting, itching and dizziness. Contact your healthcare provider if you have any medical concerns. Go to the emergency department if you have severe symptoms (e.g. fevers, difficulty breathing, chest pain, persistent nausea, vomiting or diarrhea).



5. Follow-Up?

Ask your prescriber when your pain should get better. If your pain is not improving as expected, or if your pain is not well controlled, talk to your healthcare provider.

Prevent Medication Accidents

It is important to:



Store Safely

Store your opioid medication in a secure place; out of reach and out of sight from children, teens and pets.



Dispose Safely

Take all unused and expired medications back to a pharmacy for safe disposal. Talk with your pharmacist if you have any questions. For locations that accept returns:

☎ 1-844-535-8889 [🔗 healthsteward.ca](https://healthsteward.ca)



Never share

your opioid medication with anyone else.

What is the risk? Unused medications can pose a serious hazard to both yourself and others. Unused, unwanted or expired medications should be disposed of as soon as possible when no longer needed to prevent accidental exposure or abuse by others.

Did you know?



16 Canadians are hospitalized each day with opioid poisoning. Those aged 15 to 24 years old have the fastest growing rate of hospitalizations.

— Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2017



In 2016, opioids were responsible for 50% more deaths than car crashes.

— Public Health Agency of Canada, 2017



1 in 10 high school-aged teens in Ontario have tried an opioid medication recreationally.

— Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2015

Examples of opioids used for pain after surgery:

hydromorphone

morphine

codeine

oxycodone

tramadol

Notes: _____

Adapted with permission.