Pain Management after Surgery, Injury or Illness

What should I expect if I have pain?
- Some pain may be normal.
- It is important to know that it may not be possible to completely eliminate your pain.
- Our goal is to help you to manage your pain so that you can get back to your normal routine as soon as possible.
- We will work together to create a plan to manage your pain and track the progress of the plan.
- If you have questions about your care, please tell your nurse or provider.

How is my pain measured?
- Your pain will be measured on a scale of 0 to 10.
- The pain rating scale will help you to score your pain based on your ability to function with that pain.
- For example, a score of:
  - 0 = No pain
  - 5 = Pain interrupts some activities
  - 10 = Pain is as bad as it can be, nothing else matters
- Remember, some pain is expected following illness, injury or surgery.

How will my pain be treated?
- You may be offered medication to treat your pain.
- You can also use non-medicine treatments to help manage your pain.
- If you have severe, uncontrolled pain, you may be prescribed narcotics, also known as opioids.
- You have the right to learn about your options and work with your care team to find the best treatment to manage your pain.

Non-Opioid Medicines
- Many effective medicines do not need a prescription. Examples include:
  - Acetaminophen, which you may know as Tylenol®
  - Ibuprofen, which you may know as Advil® or Motrin®
  - Aspirin
- Other low risk medicines require a prescription and are helpful for treating pain. Examples include:
  - Celecoxib, which you may know as Celebrex®

Alternative Therapies
- Alternative therapies can be very helpful in managing pain. You can try:
  - Ice or heat packs as recommended by your care team.
  - Massage, relaxation techniques or meditation.
  - Changing positions in bed.
  - Watching TV or listening to music.

Opioids, also known as Narcotics
- Opioids should only be used to treat severe pain that cannot be controlled by other methods.
- Opioids have been shown to increase your risk of complications.
- Opioids are highly addictive.
- Opioids should only be used in the lowest effective dose, for a limited amount of time.
- Opioids require a prescription. Some examples include:
  - Tramadol, known as Ultram®
  - Hydrocodone with acetaminophen, known as Lortab®, Vicodin®, Norco®.
  - Oxycodone with acetaminophen, known as Percocet®, or Roxicet®.
  - Oxycodone, known as OxyContin®.
  - Morphine, known as MS Contin®.
What will happen after I go home from the hospital?

- Your care team will discuss your ongoing care plan with you before you leave.
- You will be given detailed instructions for any medicine and follow up care.
- You may be given a prescription for medicines to take when you go home.
- Be sure to tell your care team if you have concerns about caring for yourself at home. Common concerns may include stairs, or living alone.

How should I manage pain when I go home?

- Always use non-opioid and non-medicine options first.
- Take non-opioid medicine regularly, as instructed by your care team.
- Avoid doing things that make your pain worse like heavy lifting or straining.
- Use opioids only to treat severe pain that is not controlled by other methods.
  - Always follow the instructions of your care team.
  - Always take the lowest effective dose.
  - Do not take more than prescribed.
  - Do not mix with sleeping pills or alcohol.
  - Stop taking opioids when the pain can be managed by other methods listed above.
- You may also be referred to a pain specialist when needed.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Side effects of Opiates may include:

- Sleepiness
- Dizziness
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Constipation
- Decreased breathing
- Addiction
- Overdose
- Death

Opiate dependency and addiction risk:

- The risk of dependency increases after 3 days of continuous use.
- There are many local resources to help with dependency issues.
- Opiate dependency can develop easily. Don't feel ashamed.
- Speak to your care team if you have concerns.

General medicine safety:

- Keep all medicines in a safe place, out of sight so they cannot be taken by someone else.
- Keep out of reach of children.
- Never mix opioids with sleeping pills, over the counter sleep aids or alcohol.
- Do not drive while taking opioids.
- Be careful at home when cooking, bathing, showering or using stairs. You may be more likely to hurt yourself or fall.
- For anyone taking opioids, watch for excessive sleepiness or decreased breathing as a sign of overdose. Try to arouse the person if you are concerned. Call 911 if you are unable to awaken them OR if their breathing is shallow, slow, or irregular.

Proper medicine disposal:

- Empty liquid medicine from containers, open capsules or crush tablets and mix with kitty litter, dirt or old coffee grounds. Place the mixture into a sealed bag or container and throw it in the trash.
- Take medicines to a local drug takeback center, for a list visit: https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s2
- Use a home drug disposal pouch.
- Contact your local pharmacy for help.