

Pain Management When You Go Home



Calvary

Mater Newcastle

Continuing the Mission of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary

Pain management when you go home

It is expected that, with time, you will recover from your acute illness and will not need long term pain relief. If your pain worsens after you have been discharged from hospital or your pain medication does not control your pain, contact your GP, GP Access After Hours or the nearest emergency department.

When you leave hospital, you may still experience some pain and may be prescribed pain relieving medications.

Several medications may be taken in combination which results in better pain relief as each works differently. It is important to take pain medications strictly as prescribed.

How long to continue with pain relieving medications?

As you recover and your pain improves you should reduce the amount of pain medication you take. If you are unsure, please discuss with your doctor prior to discharge, to your GP or your pharmacist.

As your pain improves:

- 1 Firstly, reduce then stop the very strong pain relief e.g. Oxycodone (Endone)
- 2 Reduce and then stop any anti-inflammatory medications e.g. Ibuprofen
- 3 Finally, reduce and then stop the regular paracetamol and take only as needed

Types of pain medication

Paracetamol

Paracetamol 500mg tablets (brand names: Panadol, Panamax, Dymadon)

The usual adult dose of Paracetamol is one or two 500mg tablets, four times a day. This may have been prescribed to be taken regularly, to keep constant pain under control or only when required for occasional pain. The risk of side effects are low when used as recommended. If you have liver disease, consult your doctor before taking Paracetamol. There are some Paracetamol products that are available which are a higher strength and longer acting. Talk to your pharmacist about the dose of these.

Anti-inflammatory Medication

Ibuprofen, Meloxicam, Diclofenac, Naproxen

These medications are used to control mild to moderate pain caused by inflammation or swelling. They can be combined with other pain medications to relieve more severe pain. Side effects are more common than paracetamol with these medications and require caution in some people. Common side effects include heartburn, stomach upset, dizziness, diarrhoea and headache.

These medications also have the potential to interact with other drugs e.g. warfarin and some blood pressure medication. Before taking this medication it is important to let your doctor or pharmacist know if you have a history of:

- stomach ulcer or bleeding
- asthma
- kidney problems
- heart failure
- allergies to these medications

Or are taking any other medications.

If you experience side effects such as: blackened stools, blood in vomit, skin rash, difficulty breathing or swollen ankles, contact your doctor immediately

Opioids

Codeine, Morphine, oxycodone (trade names: Oxycontin, Oxynorm, Endone)

Opioids are very effective pain relievers. Opioids are only to be used for moderate to severe pain. There are different types of opioids that you may be prescribed. They are available in tablets, capsules and liquids. These will often be used as well as paracetamol and anti-inflammatory medication but should **NOT** be taken instead of these if they have been prescribed for you.

Common side effects include nausea, vomiting, itch, confusion, headache and dizziness. Drowsiness can occur with opioids, and may mean that your dose needs to be reviewed. If affected do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery. Let your doctor know if you become excessively drowsy.

Constipation is very common and you may need to take some laxatives for this reason. To prevent constipation ensure you have adequate fluid and fibre intake.

My discharge pain medication plan

Pain relief medication name	Instructions
Other methods of pain relief	

About Calvary

Calvary is a charitable Catholic not-for-profit organisation, operating across six states and territories within Australia. Established in Sydney in 1885, by the arrival of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary in Australia, our mission is to provide health care to the most vulnerable, including those reaching the end of their life.



Mater Newcastle

Calvary Mater Newcastle

Locked Bag 7 Hunter Region Mail Centre NSW 2310 Australia

P: 02 4921 1211 www.calvarymater.org.au