

Remember

- Some pain after surgery is normal. Pain is usually worst right after surgery, and it should get better as time passes.
- Your care team is here to help you manage your pain and get you back to healthy living. Talk to your doctor about how you can manage your pain.
- You have many options for managing your pain, including taking medications, resting, or other activities that you and your doctor agree could help you.
- Opioid medications are one option for pain management. They have risks and side effects, so it's important to take them safely.



To watch a video about managing your pain after you have surgery, go to [PENNJ-SOS.com/managepain](https://pennj-sos.com/managepain)



Pennsylvania – New Jersey
**SURGICAL OPIOID
STEWARDSHIP**

The AmerisourceBergen
FOUNDATION



THE HEALTH CARE
IMPROVEMENT FOUNDATION

This material was produced by the Pennsylvania/ New Jersey – Surgical Opioid Stewardship (PENNJ-SOS) program, with funding from the AmerisourceBergen Foundation.

Get Help

If you need assistance in finding a treatment provider or funding for addiction treatment, call

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

If you think someone may have overdosed, call 911 immediately.

MY DOCTOR



Name:

Telephone:

MY PHARMACY



Name:

Telephone:

Notes:



Managing Your Pain After You Have Surgery

Learn how to manage your pain after surgery safely, using medications and other therapies to control pain with the least amount of side effects.

The goal of safe pain control after surgery is to minimize your pain, keep you moving, and help you heal.

Updated: September 2021



Pain After You Have Surgery

Some pain after surgery is normal.

Some pain after surgery is normal. The pain you feel depends on the type of surgery you have. Pain is usually worst right after surgery. It should get better, and easier to manage, as time passes. If your pain is not getting better over time, talk to your surgeon.

Managing Your Pain

Talk to your surgeon about the best ways to control your pain after you have surgery. Together, you can come up with a plan for managing your pain. Your plan might include:

- Taking medication that you can buy without a prescription (“over-the-counter”)
- Taking medication that your doctor prescribes for you
- Getting enough rest
- Light activities like walking or stretching
- Mindfulness activities like deep breathing, meditation, or listening to music
- Other activities that you and your doctor agree might help you

Using Opioids Safely

Your surgeon may prescribe an opioid (also known as a narcotic) for you after surgery. Taken for a short amount of time, opioids can be very effective for relieving severe pain. Opioids can have side effects and serious risks, including addiction.

To take opioids safely, you should:

- Take them exactly as directed
- Store them in the original container, in a safe location
- Stop taking them when you no longer need them
- Safely dispose of unused pills

You can refuse opioids if you think they are not the best option for you. Talk to your surgeon if you do not want opioids. Together, you and your surgeon can come up with a different plan for managing your pain.

Your care team is here to help you manage your pain and get back to healthy living. Ask questions and talk about your concerns.

My Pain Plan

Your doctor and care team can help you decide the best ways to manage your pain. Your pain will change as you heal. Your plan for managing your pain may change, too.

Check off the actions you will take to on the list below.

To use my opioid medication safely, I will:

- Take medication as recommended by my doctor
- Rest when I feel tired
- Listen to my favorite songs
- Meditate and breathe deeply
- _____

I will call my doctor if:

- My pain gets very bad or I can't control it
- I have questions about my pain management plan
- I have new symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or a high fever

