



Neil J. Wells INC. MD, FRCSC

Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

Hand & Microvascular Surgery

Cosmetic Surgery

Managing Your Pain

Many people hesitate to report their pain and to take medication. They may be concerned about becoming addicted or appearing weak to others, or they may be afraid of what the pain means, or of being a bother. Addiction is very rare when medications are taken for pain. Remember that each person's pain is his or her own. Your experience may be very different from that of a friend who had the same type of illness or problem.

There are several ways that your pain can be managed. Different types of medicines are used to relieve pain and your doctor will choose the one that will be best for you.

NSAIDS (Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as aspirin, Ibuprofen or Naproxen.

These medicines reduce swelling and soreness. They relieve mild to moderate pain. NSAIDS work well alone or with other pain medicines. There are some side effects to watch for: nausea, stomach bleeding, or kidney problems.

Opioids such as Morphine, Codeine, Dilaudid, Percocet and Demerol.

These medicines work well for moderate to severe pain. They can cause drowsiness or constipation. Addiction is not a problem when the medicine is used properly.

Combining Opioids (narcotics) and NSAIDs (anti-inflammatory drugs)

The combination of opioids and NSAIDs is a very effective and safe way to relieve pain, often a better way than when using either alone. Your doctor may discuss this 2-pronged approach to managing your pain. For example: Take the NSAID continuously and add narcotic as needed for pain not covered by the NSAID.

Whatever kind of pain medicine you are getting, it is most helpful to take it before the pain gets severe. People often wait too long to take their medicine. This makes it harder to get relief.

What You Can Do

While it is important to use pain medicine, there are other ways to help manage your pain:

- Take slow, deep breaths to help you relax
- Change your position to increase your comfort.
- Adjust the temperature or lighting in the room.
- Take your mind off the pain by listening to music, watching TV, reading, or visiting with family and friends

Your pain management is a key part of your care. You and Dr. Wells can work together to manage your pain for a smoother recovery. As you recover, your need for pain medication should decrease. Talk with Dr. Wells if you have any questions or concerns about your pain management at any time during your recovery.