



## **Guidelines for Your Pain Management**

As part of a nationwide effort towards enhanced patient safety, the University of Michigan Department of Orthopaedic Surgery has developed pain management guidelines for our patients. We ask that you review these guidelines as you begin care within our Department. Please address any questions or concerns that you might have directly with your care provider. These guidelines will assist in achieving safe and effective pain management both before and after your surgical care.

### **Before your surgery:**

You will be instructed to stop certain medications that you might be taking for pain. Once you stop these medications, you may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) to help manage your pain before surgery. Tylenol is not one of the medications you need to stop. Some recommended ways to take Tylenol are listed below; choose **one** of the following:

- 500 mg (1 tablet every 4 hours or 2 tablets every 8 hours)
- 325 mg (2 tablets every 6 hours)
- 650 mg tablet (1 tablet every 6 hours)

You should not exceed 3000 milligrams of this medication per day.

If you are taking a prescription narcotic pain medication before surgery, do not increase the amount that you are taking. You should try to minimize the amount of narcotic medication that you take before surgery, otherwise it may be very challenging to manage your pain after surgery. Please let us know if you are taking large amounts of narcotic pain medication. If you are taking too much, your surgery may be postponed to allow you to safely wean this down. We do not favor prescribing any narcotic pain medications before surgery for chronic conditions or in preparation for elective surgery.

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### **After your surgery:**

You will be given a prescription for pain medication that should last until your 2-week post-operative appointment. At that visit we will assess your progress. In most cases, we expect you to be off of narcotic pain medications by six weeks after surgery. If your pain medication needs exceeds this timeline, we may refer you to your Primary Care Physician or a Pain Management Specialist to assist in your pain management.

### **How do I wean off my pain medication?**

Your pain and need for medication should decrease slowly with each day.

- When you first get home, you should take your pain pills on a regular basis.
- Begin taking less medication as you get further along in your recovery. If you are taking 2 tablets at a time, decrease to 1 tablet.
- Try to switch to over-the-counter medications as soon as you can.
- As you have less pain, increase the time between pain pills. For example, take 1 pill every 6 hours and then decrease to 1 pill every 8 hours.
- Eventually, you may only need to take pain pills when you expect a lot of activity or at night to help make you comfortable enough to sleep.

If you have questions about weaning your pain medicine, please call the clinic.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO REFILL PAIN MEDICATION PRESCRIPTIONS BY TELEPHONE ON NIGHTS, WEEKENDS, AND OFF-HOURS. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.**