



This letter provides important information about pain management during post oral surgery recovery. Post-operative pain is quite different in each individual. Most patients experience mild to moderate discomfort and may only need non-narcotic medications or low potency opioids for effective relief. Others may experience higher levels of pain requiring more potent narcotic pain medications. With known facts about the current opioid epidemic, please note the following safety recommendations:

### General Pain Management Strategies

- There are two main approaches in managing post-operative pain: "**Ease-Up or Ease-Down**". With "**Ease-Up**" you begin with NSAID medications (Ibuprofen & Acetaminophen) and add opioid-based medications if necessary. With "**Ease-Down**" you may begin with opioids for a short period of time (1-2 days) and taper down to NSAID as soon as possible.
- Begin your pain medication right away while the sites are still numb from local anesthesia.
- **Mild to moderate pain:** use non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) such as Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen. Avoid opioids as much as possible.

**Non-Opioid Regimen: Take 600 mg of Ibuprofen (Advil) TOGETHER with 500 mg of Acetaminophen (Tylenol) TOGETHER every 4-6 hours. You may also add 100 mg of Caffeine twice daily for added pain relief.**

- Tylenol #3 may be used as an alternative for management of moderate levels of pain.
- **Higher levels of pain:** If pain is not relieved adequately by non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) or mild opioids like Tylenol #3, you may take Vicodin or Percocet (if prescribed) with specific dosage as instructed.
- Generally, Pain relief is achieved after 2-3 dosages.

### Responsible use of Opioid-Containing Medications

- **Opioid-containing pain medications are serious and can be habit-forming.** They should be used with great caution and responsibly.
- Use only the recommended dosage.
- Limit narcotic / opioid pain medication use to 2-3 days maximally and taper to non-narcotic medications as soon as possible.
- **Parental supervision** for patients less than 18 is of paramount importance. Parents should monitor the narcotic pain medication usage and dispense them only as directed. Under no condition, should underage patients have complete possession of their narcotic pain pills and use them without supervision by parents or an older responsible person.
- Patients with history of drug addiction should inform their dentists and inquire about alternative analgesics to narcotics which can cause relapse in their rehabilitation.
- Do not drive or consume alcohol while under influence of narcotic pain medications.
- No refills are given unless medically necessary.