

Orthopedic Surgery Discussion Guide

How will my pain after surgery be managed?

There are many options to help control your pain after surgery. Ask your doctor what the best plan is for you.

How can I minimize the need for opioids? What non-opioid options do I have?

There are a variety of medications you may receive before, during and after surgery to minimize your need for opioids. They may include non-opioids, such as over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen aspirin or ibuprofen, or local anesthetics that are injected by your surgeon during a procedure to numb the area around the surgical site.

What do you need to know about me to help customize my pain management?

Your medical history (e.g., medication allergies, breathing/respiratory issues, stomach/GI issues, previous history of substance abuse, current medications you are taking, etc.) will help your surgeon better understand your treatment needs. Also informing your surgeon about your living situation (e.g., whether you reside with a caregiver or alone, your access to transportation, whether you need to use stairs, etc.) will help them to understand your specific needs and create a better plan for you. If you have young children at home, please let your surgeon know, since some surgeries may require that you don't lift anything over a certain weight.

Is this procedure associated with a lot of pain?

Ask your doctor about the level of pain that is typically associated with your surgery, so you know what to expect afterwards. When it comes to orthopedic procedures, pain associated with surgery varies based on the part of the body that is being operated on.

Will I need to wear a brace, cast or sling after surgery?

Your surgeon will discuss if a brace, cast or sling is needed for your initial healing. During this discussion, your surgeon will also discuss proper bathing with these items and other restrictions you should be aware of.

When I return home, what guidelines do I have/what restrictions should I follow? When can I get back to my normal activities?

It's important to understand how long it might take for you to get back to everyday activities (e.g., returning to work, exercising, driving, eliminating any necessary food/dietary or weight lifting restrictions, etc.). There may be things you can do on your own that can help speed your recovery (e.g., proper wound care, physical therapy, etc.).

How long will it take to fully recover from surgery? What will it involve?

The recovery from surgery is personal and can vary depending on the surgery performed and your overall health. Many orthopedic surgeries involve physical therapy afterwards so talk to your doctor about what you will need after your surgery.

What happens when the medications from surgery wear off?

The type of medication(s) you receive can depend on the type of procedure you have. Talk with your doctor about

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any pain or discomfort you may feel after surgery and make sure you have a plan in place. Also, ask about non-opioid options that provide pain relief for the first few days following surgery, often when pain is at its worst.

If You're Prescribed An Opioid, Ask These Questions:

- Is this safe to take with my other medications?
- Is this the lowest appropriate dose/number of pills?
- When can I stop taking this, and how should I wean off?
- How can I properly dispose of the pills if I don't use all of them?