

Pain management at home

After spinal fusion

What should I know about pain management?

- The goal of pain management is to make your child more comfortable but they may not be completely pain free. Your child should be able to do things like deep breathing, sitting, and walking without severe pain. Call your doctor if your child is not having good pain control. Pain after surgery or an injury may be severe for 1 to 3 days.

How can I help my child deal with pain?

There are some ways to help your child with pain at home. Ask your doctor if these would be helpful:

- Ice or heat.
- Massage, light exercise, relaxation or deep breathing techniques.
- Music or other distractions like pets, art, and books.
- Different kinds of medicine can sometimes help with pain.
- Ask your doctor before starting any medicine.

What should I know about over the counter (OTC) pain medicines?

1. Acetaminophen, sometimes called Tylenol™, will often help most pain.
 - Do **not** give acetaminophen if your child has a liver problem.
 - Too much acetaminophen can hurt your child. Follow the instructions carefully.
 - Your child may have been prescribed medicine that has acetaminophen in it. Examples of some pain medicines that have acetaminophen in them include Roxicet™, Percocet™, Lortab™, Vicodin™ or Norco™. If your child is taking a medicine with acetaminophen in it, ask your doctor before giving any more acetaminophen.
2. NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory): some types are Ibuprofen, Advil®, Motrin™ or Naproxen. These help with pain and inflammation. Inflammation means swelling.
 - Do **not** give a NSAID if your child has bleeding or kidney problems.
 - Do **not** give to a baby younger than 6 months.
 - Sometimes it is okay to use both ibuprofen and acetaminophen. They help to treat pain in different ways. You should check with your doctor first.
 - Always follow instructions carefully. To use these medicines every 6 hours, try using one and then the other. Below is an example:

Ibuprofen	• 8:00 am		2:00 pm		8:00 pm		2:00 am	
Acetaminophen		11:00 am		5:00 pm		11:00 pm		5:00 am

What should I know about opioids (narcotics)?

Another name for opioids is narcotics. Opioids are very strong pain medicines. They can help with pain in some cases. Your child should not need them for more than a few days.

- Follow the instructions on the bottle carefully.
- Only give opioids if your child has a lot of pain that is not helped by acetaminophen, ibuprofen or other ways.

- Only give an opioid if your child is awake and alert.
- Never wake up your child to give an opioid.
- Opioids may make your child sleepy. Watch and warn your child to be careful when doing activities.

There are some possible side effects of opioids.

- Not pooping or peeing.
 - Most people have poop that is soft and formed every 1 to 3 days.
 - While using opioids, your child may get a bowel plan from your doctor. They should stay on the plan until they are back to their usual activity, eating and using the bathroom.
 - Call your doctor's office if your child:
 - has belly pain.
 - has not peed or pooped as often as they usually do.
 - has a big or distended belly.
- Misuse, abuse and addiction. It is important for an adult to manage the medicine and store it safely. Safe storage is important to protect children.

What should I know about muscle relaxants?

Muscle relaxants can help calm tense muscles that cause pain. This kind of pain is called a muscle spasm. Your doctor may prescribe a muscle relaxant.

- It should only be taken as ordered by your doctor.
- It should not be taken at the same time as an opioid.
- It may make your child sleepy. Watch and warn your child to be careful when doing activities.
- Only give it if your child is awake, alert and having muscle spasms.
- Never wake your child to give this medicine.

Special information about opioids and muscle relaxants

- Teenagers should not have access to these medicines.
- Even if your child is a teen, a responsible adult should give them their dose of medicine.
- If your teen drinks alcohol, smokes cigarettes, uses smokeless tobacco or marijuana, tell their doctor.
 - These teens have higher rates of misuse of their prescription medicines later.
 - The doctor may change the pain medicines.
- Get any unused pain medicines out of your home.
 - The **Dose of Reality** website: <https://bit.ly/2Hqp0hz> can help you find a place to get rid of them.

Other teaching sheets that may be helpful

- [1844](#) Constipation

ALERT: Call your doctor with any questions, if your child is not having good pain control, or if your child has special health care needs not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.