Pain Medicine after Surgery

(Alternating acetaminophen and ibuprofen, with oxycodone for breakthrough pain)

> **We partner with you and your child to prevent and relieve pain as completely as possible.**

After a surgery or a procedure, your child may have pain and discomfort. Effective pain control will help your child feel better and heal faster. This handout describes how to safely give your child medicine to relieve pain.

What medicines will help relieve my child's pain?

There are a number of ways to treat pain. Acetaminophen and ibuprofen are common medicines used to treat pain. A stronger medicine, called oxycodone, may be prescribed for breakthrough pain. Breakthrough pain is pain that is not relieved by acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

Your child's healthcare provider has prescribed these medicines:

- ☐ Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- ☐ Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin)
- ☐ Oxycodone
- ☐ Other: _____

How much medicine do I give my child?

The dose may be different for each medicine your child is prescribed. Always read the prescription or label on the medicine container to confirm how much you should give your child. If you did not receive a prescription for Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen, you can follow the Acetaminophen (Tylenol) Dosage Table (seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1305.pdf) and Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) Dosage Table (seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1306.pdf) handouts.

How often do I give medicine for pain?

It is best to stay on top of your child's pain by treating it early, rather than waiting for it to get worse. Give your child acetaminophen every 6 hours and ibuprofen every 6 hours. Do not give them at the same time. Alternate the acetaminophen and ibuprofen medicines, so that your child gets one of these medicines every 3 hours. Continue to alternate medicines for the number of days your child's doctor prescribed.

As discomfort or pain improves, you may give your child these medicines less often, or only as needed. Use the Pain Medicine log on page 4 to keep track of when you, and other care givers, give your child pain medicines.

Should I wake my child to give them pain medicine?

If your child is resting comfortably, you do not need to wake your child to give pain medicines. But, if they wake with a lot of pain, you may want to wake them the next night to give them a dose. When possible, give your child a dose right before they go to sleep.

Does my child need to eat with pain medicine?

You can give your child acetaminophen without food (on an empty stomach). Ibuprofen and oxycodone should be given with some food.

What if acetaminophen and ibuprofen do not relieve my child's pain?

Sometimes alternating doses of acetaminophen and ibuprofen do not provide enough pain relief. For moderate to severe breakthrough pain, your child may be prescribed a stronger type of pain medicine called oxycodone. Use the scale below to assess the amount of pain your child is having. If the number of "yes" responses is 6 or more, your child is having pain that should be treated with oxycodone. You can give the oxycodone as needed along with the alternating doses of acetaminophen and ibuprofen. Wait at least 4 hours between doses of oxycodone. If your child needs more than 2 to 3 doses in a 24 hour period, contact your surgeon for guidance.

Oxycodone may cause stomach pain or nausea. If you think that your child's discomfort might be from the oxycodone, contact your doctor for other options.

Pain after Surgery Measure

Below is a list of behaviors your child may or may not have after a surgery or procedure. Watch your child's behavior for a period of time, for example, between breakfast and lunch or lunch and dinner. **If you answer "yes" to 6 or more questions, your child is having pain that should be treated with oxycodone.**

Between _____ and _____ today did your child:

- Whine or complain more than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Cry more easily than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Play less than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Not do the things they normally do? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Act worried more than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Act more quiet than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Have less energy than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Refuse to eat? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Eat less than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Hold the sore part of their body? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Try not to bump the sore part of their body? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Groan or moan more than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Look more flushed than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Want to be close to you more than usual? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Take medicine when they normally refuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Information from: Chambers, C.T., Reid, G.J., McGrath, P.J., & Finley, G.A. (1996). Development and preliminary validation of a postoperative pain measure for parents. Pain, 68, 307-313.

To Learn More

- Your child's surgery clinic
- Ask your healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.

- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Questions?

We are committed to partnering with you and your child to prevent and relieve your child's pain. Some discomfort following a procedure or surgery is expected. If you are worried that your child's pain is too severe, contact your care team at any time.

7/19
PE1251

Pain Medicine Log

Child's Name _____

Surgery Date _____

Instructions:

- Give one medicine dose every 3 hours, alternating between acetaminophen and ibuprofen.
- Give oxycodone as needed for breakthrough pain, pain that is not relieved by acetaminophen and ibuprofen. Wait at least 4 hours between doses of oxycodone.
- Your child should follow this medicine schedule for the number of days their doctor prescribed.
- **Record each medicine at the time you give it.**

Day of the week:

Alternate Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen			Oxycodone - Give as needed. Wait at least 4 hours between doses	
	Acetaminophen Give every 6 hours	**Ibuprofen** Give every 6 hours		
Time	**Time Given**	**Time Given**	**Time**	**Time Given**
6 am	▓		6 am	▓
7 am	▓ ✖		7 am	▓
8 am	▓		8 am	▓
9 am		▓	9 am	▓
10 am		▓ ✖	10 am	
11 am		▓	11 am	✖
12 pm	▓		12 pm	
1 pm	▓ ✖		1 pm	
2 pm	▓		2 pm	▓
3 pm		▓	3 pm	▓
4 pm		▓ ✖	4 pm	▓
5 pm		▓	5 pm	▓
6 pm	▓		6 pm	
7 pm	▓ ✖		7 pm	
8 pm	▓		8 pm	✖
9 pm		▓	9 pm	
10 pm		▓ ✖	10 pm	▓
11 pm	*(sleeping)*	▓	11 pm	▓
12 am	▓		12 am	▓
1 am	▓		1 am	▓
2 am	▓		2 am	
3 am		▓	3 am	
4 am		▓	4 am	
5 am	↓	▓	5 am	

Day of the week:

Alternate Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen			Oxycodone - Give as needed. Wait at least 4 hours between doses	
	Acetaminophen Give every 6 hours	**Ibuprofen** Give every 6 hours		
Time	**Time Given**	**Time Given**	**Time**	**Time Given**
6 am			6 am	
7 am			7 am	
8 am			8 am	
9 am			9 am	
10 am			10 am	
11 am			11 am	
12 pm			12 pm	
1 pm			1 pm	
2 pm			2 pm	
3 pm			3 pm	
4 pm			4 pm	
5 pm			5 pm	
6 pm			6 pm	
7 pm			7 pm	
8 pm			8 pm	
9 pm			9 pm	
10 pm			10 pm	
11 pm			11 pm	
12 am			12 am	
1 am			1 am	
2 am			2 am	
3 am			3 am	
4 am			4 am	
5 am			5 am	

Pain Medicine Log

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10 am				10 am	
11 am				11 am	
12 pm				12 pm	
1 pm				1 pm	
2 pm				2 pm	
3 pm				3 pm	
4 pm				4 pm	
5 pm				5 pm	
6 pm				6 pm	
7 pm				7 pm	
8 pm				8 pm	
9 pm				9 pm	
10 pm				10 pm	
11 pm				11 pm	
12 am				12 am	
1 am				1 am	
2 am				2 am	
3 am				3 am	
4 am				4 am	
5 am				5 am	

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	Acetaminophen Give every 6 hours	Ibuprofen Give every 6 hours			
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10 am				10 am	
11 am				11 am	
12 pm				12 pm	
1 pm				1 pm	
2 pm				2 pm	
3 pm				3 pm	
4 pm				4 pm	
5 pm				5 pm	
6 pm				6 pm	
7 pm				7 pm	
8 pm				8 pm	
9 pm				9 pm	
10 pm				10 pm	
11 pm				11 pm	
12 am				12 am	
1 am				1 am	
2 am				2 am	
3 am				3 am	
4 am				4 am	
5 am				5 am	