

## Pain Management Guidelines

Here at Neurosurgery and Spine we believe managing your pain is a team effort. We will work with you and your primary care provider to help manage your pain. This handout explains a little bit more about pain management after surgery.

### **Pain after your surgery:**

You may experience more pain, numbness, and tingling about 3-9 days after your surgery. This could feel similar to before surgery. This is normal.

It takes nerves up to 12 months to heal after surgery. The pain, numbness and tingling should get better during this time but may never completely go away.

### **Pain management:**

We recommend both nonprescription and prescription options for managing your pain. **Talk to your provider before starting any new 'over the counter' medicines.**

### **Non-Prescription options:**

- Put ice on the surgery site for up to 20 minutes at a time, 3-4 times per day. Do this during the first few days after your surgery.
- You can also try taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatories like:
  - Advil (ibuprofen or Motrin)
  - Aleve (naproxen)
  - Mobic (meloxicam)
  - Tylenol (acetaminophen) - Do not take more than 3000 mg per day

**If you have had a fusion, you should not take this category of medicines until cleared by your physician.**

### **Prescription options:**

We only prescribe medicines like narcotics for surgery, if needed, and on a **short-term** (4-6 weeks) basis. After that time we may send your medicine management to your primary care provider.

We may prescribe to you:

- Muscle relaxants like Flexeril (cyclobenzaprine); Zanaflex (tizanidine); Robaxin (methocarbamol)
- Steroids like prednisone taper or Medrol pack
- Nerve stabilizer like Neurontin (gabapentin), Lyrica (pregabalin), Elavil (amitriptyline)
- Opiates and other pain medicine, like narcotics, if appropriate

### **You can help us manage your pain:**

You are a partner with us in managing your pain. Here are a few things you can do:

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- Plan ahead. Call the office (during normal business hours, not on weekends or holidays) when you have only a 2-3 day supply of any medicine we have prescribed. **We need a 48 hour notice for all refills.**
- Be honest about your past and current use of pain medicines and alcohol
- Call the office to tell us about your change in symptoms, if your pain gets worse and you feel you need to take more medicine. This lets us schedule an office visit to check your symptoms and make sure that you do not run out of medicine early.
- Be careful where you store your medicines. Be sure they are out of reach and sight of others. If pain medicine is lost, disposed of, or flushed, we will not be able to give replacements.
- You must give us a copy of your written police report when you ask us for more medicine, if your medicine was stolen.
- Bring all of your bottles of pain medicines with you if we ask you to come in to the office for a medicine check. We reserve the right to randomly obtain a urine screen if we think necessary.
- Sign a narcotic contract agreement, if your surgeon asks you to.

Still have questions? Call our office at (207) 885-0011