



## Post-Operative Pain Medication

It is important to know that there will be some pain after surgery – this is very normal. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as “painless surgery.” While pain can sometimes be a marker of something going wrong, in the context of surgery, it is usually completely normal. If you are concerned about the level of pain that you are experiencing, please call Dr. Porter’s office and he and his team can discuss with you and ask a few questions to confirm that your level of pain is normal and not a sign of something dangerous.

Dr. Porter uses the pain scale from 0-10 to try to help recommend how many opiate pain pills to take, so try to be honest with yourself about your pain level. A pain level of zero is no pain at all, and 10 is the worst pain in the world. Dr. Porter recommends not taking any opiates if your pain is in a 0-4 range. Pain in the range of 0-4 is generally expected and very normal. If your pain rises above a 0-4, use the charts below for some recommendations of how to add in opiate medication to try to bring it down to the 0-4 range.

## Opiate Pain Medications

You have been given a prescription for an opiate pain medication (Oxycodone, Percocet, Norco, etc.). By following the “Over-The-Counter Medicine” Regimens below, you may be able to avoid taking any of the opiate medication, or may only need it for a day or two. Feel free to wean off the opiate as soon as you can.

If you have been prescribed Percocet, Norco, or Tylenol #3 for the pain medication, these medications have ACETAMINOPHEN (same as TYLENOL) in them:

- PERCOCET = OXYCODONE + ACETAMINOPHEN (TYLENOL)
- NORCO = HYDROCODONE + ACETAMINOPHEN (TYLENOL)
- TYLENOL #3 = CODEINE + ACETAMINOPHEN (TYLENOL)

Alternatively, you may have been prescribed plain OXYCODONE or TRAMADOL for your pain medication, which do not contain acetaminophen (Tylenol).

For TYLENOL (acetaminophen), the MAXIMUM dosage that you can take in a 24 hour period is 4000 mg (4 grams). Please keep track of the amount of Tylenol that you are taking, whether that is over-the-counter Tylenol or Tylenol that is included in your opiate (Percocet or Norco).

- Side effects of the pain medication include itching, nausea, vomiting, dry mouth, constipation, dizziness and lightheadedness. Taking the medication with food will decrease the risk of nausea. **To prevent constipation, it is recommended that you take a stool softener (e.g. Colace, Senna) while taking the opiate. Colace or Senna can be purchased over the counter.**
- If taking the opiate medication causes you to experience itching without a rash, and without any swelling of the mouth or difficulty breathing, this is very common, and is not a true allergy. The best way to manage this is to try to wean off the opiates and just take

the Advil/Tylenol regimen described below, or to take Benadryl for the itching. However, the Benadryl may not manage the itching very well, and often just puts you to sleep so you aren't as bothered by the itching.

- If you have a history of Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), be sure to let Dr. Porter know as he may decide to change your post-operative pain regimen.
- Do NOT drive a car or operate any heavy machinery while you are taking narcotic pain medication (OxyCODONE, Oycontin, Norco, Percocet, Tylenol #3, Tramadol, etc.).
- Try to wean yourself off of the opiate pain medication as soon as possible. Using Dr. Porter's regimen below will help you transition away from the opiates as soon as possible.

---

## Suggested Pain Management Regimens With OVER-THE-COUNTER Medications

Note that generic medications are exactly the same as brand name and can be substituted at lower cost and without any change in effectiveness.

For example:

Ibuprofen = Advil = Motrin  
Acetaminophen = Tylenol

### **MODERATE PAIN (Pain level 5-7/10) - OVER THE COUNTER REGIMEN**

Times listed are an example, medications may be taken every 6 hours

DO NOT take the plain Tylenol at the same time as your pain medication if it has acetaminophen in it already (e.g. Percocet, Norco)

6:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen)</li><li>● 1000 mg Tylenol (acetaminophen)</li></ul>
12:00pm (noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen)</li><li>● 1000 mg Tylenol (acetaminophen)</li></ul>
6:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen)</li><li>● 1000 mg Tylenol (acetaminophen)</li></ul>
12:00am (midnight)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen)</li><li>● 1000 mg Tylenol (acetaminophen)</li></ul>

**SIGNIFICANT PAIN (Pain level 8-10/10) - OVER-THE-COUNTER REGIMEN**

Times listed are for example.

IN ADDITION to the “Over-The-Counter” pain regimen below, the opiate you have been prescribed (Percocet, Norco, etc.) can be taken **in place of a dose of plain Tylenol** AS NEEDED to supplement your pain and manage breakthrough moments of increased pain.

You are encouraged to try to stop taking the opiate as soon as possible, and if you can manage without the opiate, please feel free to do so. At each moment that you are taking your other medications, try to assess your level of pain and the need for any additional medication with the opiate.

DO NOT take the plain Tylenol at the same time as your pain medication if it has acetaminophen in it already (e.g. Percocet, Norco)

6:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen)</li></ul>
9:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1000 mg Tylenol (acetaminophen) <b>or</b> pain medication (Percocet or Norco)</li></ul>
12:00pm (noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen)</li></ul>
3:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1000 mg Tylenol (acetaminophen) <b>or</b> pain medication (Percocet or Norco)</li></ul>
6:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen)</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1000 mg Tylenol (acetaminophen) <b>or</b> pain medication (Percocet or Norco)</li></ul>
12:00am (midnight)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen)</li></ul>

- Note that this regimen is the same as the “Moderate Pain” regimen, however, it splits the Advil and the Tylenol so that they are taken at different times. In this regimen, you are taking SOMETHING every 3 hours, so you are always on the “upswing” of one or the other medication. Just as one of the medications is wearing off, you are dosing yourself with the other medication.

## Suggested Pain Management Regimens WITH OPIOID PAIN MEDICATION

### **MODERATE PAIN (Pain level 5-7/10) – Opioid Medication**

Times listed are an example, Percocet/Norco may be taken every 4-6 hours.

6:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen) <b>+plus</b></li> <li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li> <li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li> <li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li> </ul>
12:00pm (noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen) <b>+plus</b></li> <li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li> <li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li> <li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li> </ul>
6:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen) <b>+plus</b></li> <li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li> <li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li> <li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li> </ul>
12:00am (midnight)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen) <b>+plus</b></li> <li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li> <li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li> <li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li> </ul>

### **SIGNIFICANT PAIN (Pain level 8-10/10) – Opioid Medication**

Times listed are an example, Percocet/Norco can be taken every 3-4 hours at the most.

*\*\*\* If you are following this regimen and are consistently taking TWO oxycodone at EACH time point, please call Dr. Porter to let him know that you are requiring that level of pain relief. \*\*\**

6:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen) <b>+plus</b></li><li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li> <li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li></ul>
9:00-10:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li></ul>
12:00pm (noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen) <b>+plus</b></li><li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li></ul>
3:00-4:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li></ul>
6:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen) <b>+plus</b></li><li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li></ul>
9:00-10:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li></ul>
12:00am (midnight)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 mg Advil (ibuprofen) <b>+plus</b></li><li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li></ul>
3:00-4:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pain Level 0-4: NO Percocet/Norco, or</li><li>• Pain Level 5-7: ONE Percocet/Norco, or</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pain Level 8-10: TWO Percocet/Norco</li></ul>
--	---