

It is normal to experience some pain after your operation, especially as the anaesthetic wears off. Pain can disturb your sleep and limit you doing your normal activities. It is important for your recovery that your pain is controlled. It is not always possible to remove your pain completely, but you should be comfortable.

Types of Pain relief medications

Paracetamol:

- It should be taken regularly every 4-6 hours (up to 4 doses in 24 hours).
- Paracetamol helps to increase the effect of other pain relief medication.
- Never exceed the dose and never take paracetamol with other paracetamol containing medications (e.g. Co-codamol/cold & flu remedies).
- Please read the product information leaflet for information on dosing.
- If you have liver problems, please speak to your doctor/pharmacist before taking paracetamol.

Ibuprofen:

- This can be taken every 6-8 hours (up to 3 doses in 24 hours).
- Ibuprofen is an anti-inflammatory drug.
- Please read the product information leaflet for information on dosing.
- Ibuprofen is not suitable for everyone – if you are unsure about taking ibuprofen ask your doctor, a pharmacist or read the product information leaflet.
- If you have reflux/indigestion issues it is advised not to take ibuprofen.

Co-codamol:

- This is a medication that contains paracetamol and a weak opioid called codeine.
- As you recover and the pain reduces, stop taking co-codamol and **ONLY** take paracetamol, until the pain has gone.
- Never take paracetamol and paracetamol containing medications within 6 hours of each other.
- Currently there is a shortage of co-codamol so you may be prescribed codeine instead. If this happens you will need to take paracetamol separately.

How to take your Pain Relief medications

Paracetamol/Co-codamol: 4-6 hourly

Ibuprofen: 6-8 hourly (with food)

Taking your pain-relief medication regularly is important for effective pain management. Do not leave taking you painkillers until your pain is bad. Allow 20-30 minutes for the medication to work. Staggering your medications will help with pain relief, as one wears off the other is working. If you feel this is not controlling your pain, see your GP.

Stopping painkillers

As your pain improves you can start to reduce the amount of pain relief that you are taking. Discontinue the strongest painkillers first (e.g. Co-codamol). Paracetamol should be the last painkiller that you stop.

Other information

Constipation: Painkillers can cause constipation. If this happens, you can buy simple laxatives at any chemist.

Food: It is advisable to always take ibuprofen with food as it can cause stomach irritation.

Rest: It is normal when to feel tired when you are recovering from an operation and it is important to rest when you get home. You should gradually increase your activity over a few days and be aware and be mindful of how you are feeling before increasing your daily activities.

Heat: You can use a hot water bottle, a heated towel or a heat pad to help relieve pain; you must be careful not to overheat the skin as this can cause bleeding.

Cold: A cold flannel, an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel may help reduce swelling.

Distraction therapy: Tension makes pain feel worse, so anything that will help you relax and take your mind off pain will help.

If you need any help or information, please contact the Surgical Hub @ Llandough between 7am-7pm (Monday-Friday) on 02921 826510 or 02921 826348, your GP or 111 out of hours.

Time of last drugs given on Day Surgery Unit/West 6

Paracetamol/ Co-codamol: _____ Next dose due: _____

Ibuprofen: _____ Next dose due: _____

Use the chart below to help you keep a record of the drugs you have taken

Day	Pain score/10	What tablets did I take?
Operation		
Day 1		
Day 2		
Day 3		
Day 4		
Day 5		
Day 6		
Day 7		

WARNING

- Do not exceed the maximum daily dose of your painkillers.
- Do not take alcohol or recreational drugs whilst taking painkillers.
- Driving: Please be aware that opioid containing medications (e.g. co-codamol) may impair your driving ability. You may be liable to prosecution if your driving is impaired whilst you take these drugs. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law>.