

# Remember

Your surgeon may prescribe an opioid for you after surgery. Opioids can have side effects and serious risks, including addiction. To take opioids safely, you should:

- Take them only as directed
- Take the lowest dose, for the shortest amount of time
- Store them in the original container, in a safe location
- Stop taking them when you no longer need them
- Safely dispose of unused pills

Your care team is here to help you manage your pain and get back to healthy living. Ask questions and talk about your concerns.



To **watch a video** about managing your pain after you have surgery, go to [bit.ly/POSSEvideo](http://bit.ly/POSSEvideo)



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# Get Help

If you need assistance in finding a treatment provider or funding for addiction treatment, call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**.

**If you think someone may have overdosed, call 911 immediately.**

## My Doctor

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

## My Pharmacy

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Notes

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# Managing Pain After Surgery With Opioids



Some pain after surgery is normal. Opioid medications are one option to help you manage severe pain. Learn how to manage your pain with opioids safely, to minimize your side effects and risks.

The goal of safe pain control after surgery is to **minimize your pain, keep you moving, and help you heal.**

## Using Opioids After Surgery

### **Some pain after surgery is normal.**

Effectively managing your pain after surgery will help you heal. Opioid medications, also called narcotics, are one option to help you manage severe pain, but they must be used safely.

Follow your doctor's instructions, and take the lowest dose for the shortest amount of time. To take opioids safely:

- Never take more opioids than you are told to take.
- Never take opioids more often than prescribed.
- Stop taking them when you no longer need them. You do not need to finish the entire bottle of medication.

Common side effects of opioids include dizziness, itching, constipation, nausea, and feeling very tired. Serious side effects include trouble breathing, tolerance, and dependence. You can lessen your risk of serious side effects by taking opioids safely.

**You can refuse opioids if you think they are not the best option for you.** Together, you and your surgeon can come up with a different plan for managing your pain.

## Risks of Using Opioids

The risks of taking opioids include misuse, addiction, overdose, and death. These risks increase if you combine opioids with anti-anxiety medications, medications that make you sleepy, and other opioids. Do not drink alcohol or use other substances while taking opioids. Before your surgery, talk to your doctor about your current medications.

Anyone can develop opioid use disorder (addiction). You may be at greater risk if you or a family member has had problems with drugs or alcohol (substance use disorder), or if you have a condition like depression or anxiety. Take the lowest dose of opioids for the shortest amount of time to help control your pain, minimize side effects, and keep you safe.

## Safe Storage and Disposal

To safely store your opioids:

- Keep opioid medication in its original bottle in a safe place.
- Keep away from children and pets.
- Keep track of the number of pills in the bottle, if you can.

Dispose of unused medication as soon as you no longer need it. To find a drug take-back site near you, visit the website

[bit.ly/POSSEdisposal](https://bit.ly/POSSEdisposal)



## My Opioid Safety Plan

Using your opioid medication safely will help lessen your risks. **Check off the actions you will take to manage your pain on the list below.**

**To use my opioid medication safely, I will:**

- Always take my medication only as directed.
- Keep my medication in its original package.
- Keep track of how much I have taken and how much I have left.
- Store it in a safe place:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Take unused medication to a safe disposal site when I no longer need it:  
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- Call my doctor if I have concerns or questions.

**If I feel unsafe using opioids, I will:**

- Tell my doctor.
- Come up with a different plan to manage my pain with my doctor.