

Joint Replacement: Pain Management

To properly manage your pain after joint replacement surgery, your healthcare provider will evaluate your pain level and prescribe medications to help reduce your pain so you can achieve your recovery goals. The first day of your recovery, pain medications will be given to you in an injection, pill, or IV. If you are still in pain, let your healthcare provider know. She may be able to adjust the amount or type of medication you are getting.

As you recover, your pain will be managed with pills. Take all of your medications as directed. If you don't, you may not want to move as much as you need to in order to meet your recovery goals. While in the hospital, you will steadily improve and gradually your pain will become more manageable. Once you leave the hospital, you will continue to take prescription pain medications. Take these medications as directed.

Eventually, you will be able to reduce the amount of prescription pain medication you take and begin to take over-the-counter pain relievers instead. If your healthcare provider recommends you take Tylenol, make sure you take it as directed. If you find you need to take more than directed, let your healthcare provider know.

Physical therapy, exercise and movement can cause pain after your surgery. But you need to exercise in order to regain your strength and reach your recovery goals. Take your pain medication one hour before a physical therapy session or before you plan to exercise in order to reduce your pain.

In addition to pain medication, there are other ways for you to manage your pain at home. Make sure to change positions about every 45 minutes. If you stay still for too long, your muscles can stiffen, which may be painful. Use ice packs or a bag of frozen vegetables on the location of the pain. This can reduce swelling and make you feel better. Do not use ice for more than 20 minutes at a time.

Pain management is an important part of your recovery. Take your medications as prescribed. If you have any concerns about your medications or would like more ways to reduce your pain in order to reach your goals, talk to your healthcare provider.