

Managing your Child's Pain at Home After Surgery

Pain relief after your child's operation

This leaflet is written to help you manage your child's pain after discharge from hospital.

After an operation, your child will be allowed to go home if doctors are satisfied with your child's recovery and if your child's pain is under control.

During the operation, the anaesthetist would have given some pain medicine to your child whilst they are asleep. This should work to relieve pain for several hours and usually means your child will be comfortable when they wake up.

The anaesthetist may also give your child a local anaesthetic block whilst they are asleep. A local anaesthetic block is where the doctors inject some local anaesthetic around the area of the operation whilst your child is asleep. This will numb your child's wound for 6-8 hours and help keep comfortable after the operation.

We encourage you to give your child pain relief regularly, rather than waiting for them to be in pain before giving these medicines. Depending on the type of operation, you may have to give regular pain relief for at least 2 days.

How do I know if my child is in pain?

In hospital, your nurse will use pain assessment tools to help assess and treat your child's pain. At home, there are several ways to help determine if your child is in pain.

For children who are very young or unable to communicate, they may be in pain if they are:

- constantly clenching their jaw or frequently grimacing

- very restless or tense
- crying, screaming and difficult to console

For children who are able to communicate:

- ask if they are sore
- for older children, ask them to score their pain from 0 to 10 (10 being the worst pain)
- you may also use the picture scale in this booklet to help your child communicate pain with you

Most importantly, trust your own instincts – if you think your child is in pain, you are probably right!

Non-drug methods of pain relief

These can help get rid of pain and can help reduce the amount of pain your child experiences. They can be used alongside regular pain medicine.

Distraction

Help your child to concentrate on something other than their pain. Toys, jokes, games, books, iPads, films and DVDs or the television can all be helpful.

Relaxation

Simple techniques like deep breathing, rhythmically moving a leg or loosening a fist can relax other body parts and dramatically reduce pain.

Physiotherapy, massage and touch can be used to help your child to relax and be more comfortable.

Medicines for pain relief

When you get home,

- We encourage you to give your child pain relief regularly, rather than waiting for them to be in pain before giving these medicines.
- If your child's pain is not controlled by regular paracetamol and ibuprofen, give them a dose of morphine liquid (if prescribed).
- Please only give the doses of pain medicines that have been prescribed for your child by the hospital.

Paracetamol

Paracetamol is good for treating mild to moderate pain in children. It is sold in 2 different strengths:

- Infant formulation comes in 120mg/5ml strength, and is used for children below the age of 6.
- Six-plus formulation comes in 250mg/5ml strength, and is used for children aged 6 and above.

Please ensure you buy the correct strength (delete as appropriate): Infant (120mg/5ml) / Six-plus (250mg/5ml)

- Give ml every 4-6 hours.
- This is based on your child's weight. We may be able to give you a measuring syringe to use.
- After you leave hospital, the next dose is due at
- Leave at least 4 hours between doses and do not give more than 4 doses of paracetamol in any 24-hour period.

Ibuprofen

Ibuprofen is good for treating inflammation (redness and swelling) as well as pain. It is sold as a 100mg/5ml oral suspension. You can give ibuprofen as well as paracetamol. These drugs work in different ways and complement each other.

- Give ml every 6-8 hours, during or after a meal if possible.

- After you leave hospital, the next dose is due at
- Leave at least 6 hours between doses and do not give more than 3 doses of ibuprofen in 24 hours.
- Do not give your child ibuprofen if they are less than 3 months old or weigh less than 5 kilograms, or have heart, kidney or liver problems.
- Ibuprofen may worsen the symptoms of asthma in some children. If your child has had no problems with ibuprofen in the past you may continue to give it.

Morphine liquid

You may be given morphine liquid if your child's pain is not controlled by regular paracetamol and ibuprofen, as it is a stronger pain medicine. It can only be obtained with a doctor's prescription, and usually comes in a 10mg/5ml oral solution.

- Give ml as needed every 4 hours. We will give you a measuring syringe to use.
- Leave at least 4 hours between doses of morphine liquid.
- If your child is still in pain after 2 doses of morphine liquid, and you are still giving paracetamol and ibuprofen, please telephone the hospital for advice.

Other medicines

Be careful if you are buying other over-the-counter medicines for your child – some may contain Paracetamol or anti-inflammatory medicines such as Aspirin or Ibuprofen. If in doubt, please ask the pharmacist for advice.

Medication diary

It is often easy to forget the last time you have given your child pain medicines. It would be a good idea for you to write down the times and doses of pain medicines you have given in a medication diary. This will help you keep track of things, and will also help doctors and nurses if you need additional advice. There is a pain rating scale and a medication diary in the next few pages for you to use.

Wong-Baker FACES® Pain Rating Scale

Instructions for Usage



Explain to the person that each face represents a person who has no pain (hurt), or some, or a lot of pain.

Face 0 doesn't hurt at all.
 Face 2 hurts just a little bit.
 Face 4 hurts a little bit more.
 Face 6 hurts even more.
 Face 8 hurt a whole lot.

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Face 10 hurts as much as you can imagine, although you don't have to be crying to have this worst pain.

Ask the person to choose the face that best depicts the pain they are experiencing.

Medication Diary

Write down the times and doses of pain medicines you have given.

Date	Time suggested	Pain Score	Paracetamol _____ ml	Ibuprofen _____ ml	Other (Morphine) _____ ml
	7am				
	12pm				
	3pm				
	6pm				
	11pm				
	7am				
	12pm				
	3pm				
	6pm				
	11pm				
	7am				
	12pm				
	3pm				
	6pm				
	11pm				

Paracetamol should be taken every 4-6hours, no more than 4 doses per day.
Ibuprofen should be taken every 6-8 hours, no more than 3 doses per day.

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Contacts and Telephone Numbers

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us or your GP.

Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital Switchboard: 01392 411611

Bramble Ward:

Yellow Team: **01392 402679**

Blue Team: **01392 402681**

Green Team: **01392 402666**

Day Case Unit: **01392 402677**

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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