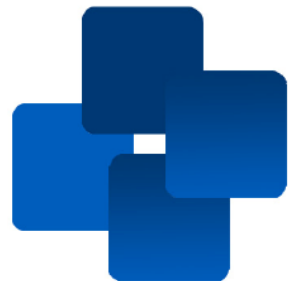


Patient Information

Controlling Your Pain After Surgery

Paracetamol, Ibuprofen and Codeine

Pharmacy Department



The purpose of this leaflet is to help you to control any pain you might have during your recovery at home. Please read it carefully.

How to take your medicines

In the first few days after the surgery, take your medicines regularly, even if you are not in pain. All painkillers work best if taken early so that they stop you feeling pain rather than treating pain once you can already feel it.

You may need to take painkillers before doing some physical activity, like walking. You should take the painkillers about one hour before you start the activity.

You have been advised to take three painkillers when you go home:

- ⇒ **Paracetamol 500mg tablets (or capsules/caplets)**
- ⇒ **Ibuprofen 200mg tablets**
- ⇒ **Codeine 30mg tablets**

After going home, when can I take my next painkillers?

Your nurse will tell you when to take your first painkillers after you get home - (Nurse to complete tables below):

Paracetamol	
Date	
Time	

Ibuprofen	
Date	
Time	

Codeine	
Date	
Time	

Information about the painkillers

Paracetamol 500mg tablets

Paracetamol is a commonly used medicine (painkiller) for treating mild or moderate pain. You can take two tablets every four hours, but **do not take more than eight tablets in 24 hours**.

Never take other medicines containing paracetamol at the same time as the paracetamol tablets you have been advised to take. This includes medicines that you can buy from the supermarket or pharmacy. If you are unsure, please check the information leaflet inside the package, or ask your pharmacist.

Ibuprofen 200mg tablets

Ibuprofen is a strong anti-inflammatory painkiller. You can take 2 x 200mg tablets (or 1 x 400mg tablet) every four hours, but do not take more than 8 x 200mg tablets (or 4 x 400mg tablets) in 24 hours. It is important that you take ibuprofen with or after food or a milky drink.

Never take other medicines containing ibuprofen (or any other anti-inflammatory arthritis/pain medicines) at the same time as the ibuprofen tablets you have been advised to take. This includes medicines that you can buy from the supermarket or pharmacy. If you are unsure, please check the information leaflet inside the package, or ask your pharmacist.

Ibuprofen may occasionally cause indigestion or stomach pain. If this happens, stop taking ibuprofen and take other painkillers instead - ask your pharmacist for advice.

Codeine 30mg tablets

Codeine is a good painkiller for mild to moderate pain. You can take one or two tablets every four hours, but **do not take more than eight tablets in 24 hours**.

Codeine should only be taken as a '**top up**' or '**rescue**' painkiller if paracetamol is not sufficient to control your pain.

Never take other medicines containing codeine or dihydrocodeine at the same time as the codeine tablets you have been instructed to take. This includes medicines that you can buy from the supermarket or pharmacy. If you are unsure, please check the information leaflet inside the package, or ask your pharmacist.

Codeine may make you feel light-headed, dizzy or drowsy. Make sure you are at home when you take the tablets for the first time, so that you can lie down if you need to. Codeine may also make you feel sick. Lying down and closing your eyes in a quiet place may help you with this. The feeling of drowsiness and sickness should wear off as your body gets used to codeine.

Codeine can also cause constipation. It helps to eat plenty of fruit, vegetables and cereals, and drink plenty of fluids. You may need to take some laxatives, speak to a pharmacist for advice. If you have been prescribed a laxative, please take it as prescribed.

The best way to take these medicines is as follows:

Breakfast	2 x 500mg paracetamol + 2 x 200mg Ibuprofen (plus 1 or 2 x 30mg codeine, if required)
Lunch	2 x 500mg paracetamol + 2 x 200mg Ibuprofen (plus 1 or 2 x 30mg codeine, if required)
Dinner	2 x 500mg paracetamol + 2 x 200mg Ibuprofen (plus 1 or 2 x 30mg codeine, if required)
Bedtime	2 x 500mg paracetamol + 2 x 200mg Ibuprofen (plus 1 or 2 x 30mg codeine, if required)

Take your painkillers regularly for ____ days and as you recover from surgery, and do not feel any pain, you can slowly reduce the number of tablets that you are taking.

Please refer to page 6 - '**How to stop taking your medicines**'.

Keep a Record

You can use this chart to record the painkillers that you take. This will also make sure that you do not take too many tablets. Tick the box when you take each drug or mark in how many tablets you have taken - **Day 0** is the day of surgery.

Day	Painkiller	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Bedtime
Day 0	Paracetamol				
	Ibuprofen				
	Codeine				
Day 1	Paracetamol				
	Ibuprofen				
	Codeine				
Day 2	Paracetamol				
	Ibuprofen				
	Codeine				
Day 3	Paracetamol				
	Ibuprofen				
	Codeine				
Day 4	Paracetamol				
	Ibuprofen				
	Codeine				
Day 5	Paracetamol				
	Ibuprofen				
	Codeine				
Day 6	Paracetamol				
	Ibuprofen				
	Codeine				

What should I do if I miss a dose?

If you are in pain, take a dose as soon as you remember. If it is nearly time for your next dose, wait until then and do not take the missed dose. Never take two doses of the same painkiller together. Take the remaining doses at the correct time.

Drinking alcohol

Do not drink alcohol while taking codeine. The mixture may make you feel very drunk and likely to fall over or accidentally injure yourself. You may drink alcohol when taking only paracetamol.

How to stop taking your medicines

If you were taking painkillers regularly before surgery, you may need to carry on taking the same amount of painkillers after the surgery. Please speak to the doctor or nurse, or ask your pharmacist.

Take your painkillers regularly. As you recover from surgery and do not feel any pain, you can slowly reduce the number of tablets that you are taking.

It is always best to take paracetamol regularly until you no longer need painkillers. If you are not feeling much pain, reduce the painkillers in the following order:

1. Codeine - only take occasionally if needed as a 'top up', but continue to take paracetamol and ibuprofen regularly.
2. Ibuprofen - once you no longer need to take codeine, try missing doses of ibuprofen during the day. If you get more pain take the ibuprofen as a 'top up', but continue to take paracetamol regularly.
3. Paracetamol - only stop taking this regularly once you are not taking any other painkillers.

Record the doses you do take on the chart so that you can monitor your progress and know when you can have 'top up' painkillers if you need to.

Where can I get painkillers from?

Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be bought at pharmacies and supermarkets. You may need to see your GP if you need more codeine or if you need to take painkillers for a long time after surgery.

Please use this space to write down your notes:

Useful contact details

If you have any questions about your medication, including the purpose and potential side effects, please contact our dedicated patient helpline for advice:

- **Dedicated Patient Helpline - Telephone 01438 286150**

Monday to Friday, 2pm - 4pm

or email: medinfo.enhtr@nhs.net (for a response by next working day).

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