

Pain management protocols following dental surgery

It is the goal of our providers that patients are able to have the minimal amount of discomfort possible following treatment in our office. Our comfort protocol considers both the scope and scale of the procedure you're going to have completed as well as your medical history and potential need for narcotics. Narcotics like hydrocodone and oxycodone have their place in the management of pain, however also come with significant risks and so are dispensed with caution and should be used only after the protocol utilizing non narcotic pain medications has not been able to manage your discomfort.

To view an accompanying video for this pain management protocol please scan the QR code or enter the following link on your computer:

<https://youtu.be/2L9xDtMV37A>



Medications commonly recommended for pain management at Puget Sound Periodontics:

- 1) **Ibuprofen** - Over the counter this medication is also called Advil or Motrin (same active ingredient). This drug is a very effective anti-inflammatory and a primary medication used for prevention of postoperative discomfort.
 - a) Ibuprofen 600 mg or 800 mg may be prescribed for you and can be taken up to five times daily (600mg dosage) or four times daily (800mg dosage).
 - b) Ibuprofen should be avoided if you take certain medications that cause thinning of the blood such as plavix, coumadin or other similar medications.
 - c) Ibuprofen should also be avoided if you suffer from kidney disease or have peptic ulcers or other bleeding issues.
 - i) Ibuprofen does have a mild blood thinning effect and can result in the development of mild to moderate bruising following surgery.
- 2) **Tylenol (Acetaminophen)** - Tylenol is a commonly used medication for the management of moderate pain.
 - a) Tylenol provides the maximum relief of dental pain when it is stacked in conjunction with Ibuprofen (taken together).
 - b) Common doses of Tylenol are two 500mg tablets taken 4 times daily in conjunction with ibuprofen.
- 3) **Narcotic Medications (hydrocodone/oxycodone)** - Typically our office will provide these medications in a pure form so that they can be stacked as needed with ibuprofen and tylenol and only used in conjunction with these medications for the management of breakthrough pain.
 - a) These medications have a high addictive potential and should be used very sparingly. Many patients will decide not to keep these medications in their homes and will go without.

- b) Our office will only prescribe these medications if we feel the scope and scale of the procedure being completed merits their usage.
 - c) Sensitivity to hot/cold following treatment does not equate to pain and use of these meds would not be appropriate in a situation such as that.
 - d) These medications should not be taken on the same day that a sedation has been completed (avoid for 24 hours).
 - e) These medications should only be taken in conjunction with Ibuprofen and tylenol and used only as long as needed.
 - f) These medications should be discarded at the pharmacy where they were obtained and not kept in the home following their use. Any remaining medication should be dispensed of.
- 4) **Corticosteroids** - (Dexamethasone or Prednisone).
- a) For cases where significant inflammation is expected OR when certain pain medications can't be utilized you may be prescribed a corticosteroid.
 - b) Commonly used for large gum grafts or large bone grafts
 - c) Should not be used in diabetic patients (please disclose if you have diabetes).

Topical Treatments:

In addition to the use of oral medications the following topical treatments are also recommended to help manage swelling and discomfort following dental/periodontal treatment and surgery.

- 1) The topical application of arnica montana.
 - a) Arnica is a cream or gel that can be applied extraorally (on the outside of the face, not the inside of the mouth) in areas where swelling or bruising has begun to develop.
 - b) Arnica will help clear bruising and swelling about 1.5x more quickly than time alone will.
- 2) The topical application of ice packs or warm compresses
 - a) Using a ziplock bag place ice cubes and apply topically to the area where surgery was completed with gentle pressure.
 - b) Doing so frequently over the first 24 hours can help with management of pain and swelling following surgery.
 - c) This will be most helpful during the first two days after surgery.
 - d) Avoid warm compresses for 72 hours after treatment. Once 72 hours has passed massaging a warm compress may help.

In addition to soreness at the site of surgery you may also have some discomfort in the jaw joints, temples or corners of your jaw. Clenching and or grinding of the teeth following surgery is not uncommon. Try to avoid doing so to prevent trauma to the surgical site or unintentionally aggravating the teeth adjacent to the surgical sites themselves.

Dosing Schedule for medications:

Day 1 - Starting immediately after your surgical procedure take 1-600mg ibuprofen and 2 extra strength tylenol (500mg each). DO NOT START by utilizing a narcotic, try to avoid their use if possible.

After 5 hours have passed, assess pain level. If mild/moderate, prepare to take the same combination of medications as your hit six hours from the initial dose (1 - 600mg ibuprofen and 2 - 500mg tylenol). If severe pain is noted and a narcotic was prescribed you may add a single narcotic pill at the same time. If sedation was used during your surgery you should not take any narcotics until the day following surgery and will ONLY use the ibuprofen and tylenol protocol.

After 11 hours have passed, assess pain level. Use the same protocol as above and prepare to redose 12 hours after your initial medication was taken.

	Take following surgery	6 hours	12 hours	18 hours	24 hours	30 hours	36 hours
Ibuprofen 600mg	1 tablet	1 tablet	1 tablet	1 tablet	1 tablet	1 tablet	1 tablet
Tylenol 500mg	2 tablets	2 tablets	2 tablets	2 tablets	2 tablets	2 tablets	2 tablets
Narcotic (Oxycodone/ Hydrocodone)	do not take initially	add if pain is severe, but not if sedatives were used for surgery (postpone to hour 24 in that case).					

The table above shows a dosing schedule for pain medications typically recommended in our office. As you can see these medications are “stacked” to manage pain. As you note your pain is dissipating you can start to reduce the medications you are taking together.

First eliminate the narcotic (avoid altogether is fine in most cases). Second, eliminate Tylenol. Third, stop taking the ibuprofen once you feel you are able to do so comfortably.

It is important to understand that pain management is best done by “staying ahead” of the discomfort rather than “chasing” the pain away.

As always your doctor will reach out to you on the evening of your procedure, check your email and reach out to the office with any specific questions.

If you have kidney, liver or bleeding issues please make sure to disclose these to our team so we can modify a comfort protocol for you as needed.

Thank you,

The Team at Puget Sound Periodontics and Implant Dentistry