



**MICHIGAN MEDICINE**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# **Managing Your Pain After Surgery Without Opioids (Tylenol Only)**

For patients participating in the  
Michigan Pain-Control Optimization Pathway  
(MPOP)

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Thank you for participating in our program to help patients manage their pain after surgery without opioids. This is part of our effort to provide you with the best care possible, without exposing you or your family to the risk that opioids pose.

## **What pain can I expect after surgery?**

You can expect to have some pain after surgery. This is normal. The pain is typically worse the day after surgery, and quickly begins to get better.

We recently conducted a study that found many patients are able to manage their pain after surgery with Over-the-Counter (OTC) medications such as Tylenol. **OTC** means the drug is available without a prescription. If you have a condition that does not allow you to take Tylenol (acetaminophen), notify your surgical team.

## **How will I manage my pain?**

The best strategy for controlling your pain after surgery is **around the clock** pain control with Tylenol (acetaminophen). **Alternating** medications with each other and other pain management techniques allows you to maximize your pain control. In addition to Tylenol, you can use heating pads or ice packs on your incisions to help reduce your pain. You may also use OTC lidocaine patches near, but not on, your incision. These may be purchased at your local pharmacy and are typically located in the back pain aisle.

### How will I take my regular strength over-the-counter pain medication?

You will take a dose of pain medication every 4 hours.

- Start by taking 500 mg of Tylenol (1 pill of 500 mg)
- 4 hours later take another 500 mg of Tylenol (1 pill of 500 mg)

See example - if your first dose of Tylenol is at 12:00 PM

12:00 PM	Tylenol 500mg (1 pill of 500 mg)
4:00 PM	Tylenol 500mg (1 pill of 500 mg)
8:00 PM	Tylenol 500mg (1 pill of 500 mg)
12:00 AM	Tylenol 500mg (1 pill of 500 mg)
Continue alternating every 4 hours	

We recommend that you follow this schedule around-the-clock for at least 3 days after surgery, or until you feel that it is no longer needed. Use the table on the last page of this handout to keep track of the medications you are taking.

### **Important:**

**Do not take more than 4000mg of Tylenol in a 24-hour period.**

### What if I still have pain?

If you have pain that is not controlled with the over-the-counter pain medications (Tylenol) you might have what we call “breakthrough” pain. If you received a prescription for a small amount of an opioid pain medication such as Oxycodone, Tramadol, or Tylenol with Codeine, use these opioid pills in the first 24 hours after surgery if you have breakthrough pain. **Do not take more than 1 pill every 4-6 hours.**

If you still have uncontrolled pain after using all opioid pills, don’t hesitate to call our staff using the number provided. We will help make sure you are

managing your pain in the best way possible, and if necessary, we can provide a prescription for additional pain medication.

<b>Day 1</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Tylenol</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
Total Daily amount of Tylenol					
<b>Do not take more than 4000 mg per day</b>					

<b>Day 2</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Tylenol</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
Total Daily amount of Tylenol					
<b>Do not take more than 4000 mg per day</b>					

<b>Day 3</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Tylenol</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					

AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
Total Daily amount of Tylenol					
<b>Do not take more than 4000 mg per day</b>					

<b>Day 4</b>					
Time	Name of Medication	Number of pills taken	Amount of Tylenol	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
Total Daily amount of Tylenol					
<b>Do not take more than 4000 mg per day</b>					

<b>Day 5</b>					
Time	Name of Medication	Number of pills taken	Amount of Tylenol	Pain Level	Comments
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
Total Daily amount of Tylenol					
<b>Do not take more than 4000 mg per day</b>					

<b>Day 6</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Tylenol</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
Total Daily amount of Tylenol					
<b>Do not take more than 4000 mg per day</b>					

<b>Day 7</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Number of pills taken</b>	<b>Amount of Tylenol</b>	<b>Pain Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
AM PM					
Total Daily amount of Tylenol					
<b>Do not take more than 4000 mg per day</b>					

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Edited by: Karelyn Munro, BA

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