

MEDICATIONS AFTER SURGERY

ANAESTHETIST: DR. JOHN CORMACK

In order to keep you comfortable following your operation I have provided some basic instructions regarding pain relieving medication. A little bit of pain is expected after surgery and protects you from doing too much too early. For wounds to heal well, they need to be rested and elevated between gentle activity.

Medication:

For simple, superficial surgery Panadol (paracetamol) or Panadeine (paracetamol + codeine) may be enough. You can buy these from your chemist; they are safe and have few side effects if taken according to packet instructions.

You may also be given a prescription for stronger pain medications which can be filled out at a pharmacy:

1. Panadeine forte: a stronger form of panadeine. Can be taken every four to six hours up to 8 tablets per day.
2. Tramadol: another strong pain reliever can be used with, or in between other medications to give greater comfort. Check with your pharmacist if you are also taking tablets for depression.
3. Endone: a powerful pain reliever for more major surgery. Can be taken if the panadeine forte and the tramadol are not enough but wait a few hours as the combined effect may be too much for some people.

All drugs have side effects, the trick with new medications is to start with a small dose and see how well you react with them. Most side effects are minor: nausea, constipation, dizziness or drowsiness. If something else worries you see your pharmacist.

Sometimes I will also prescribe an anti-inflammatory tablet like Voltaren or Nurofen for orthopaedic operations or when a blood thinning action is desirable. They can be taken with any of the above tablets (1,2 or 3). They also decrease pain significantly. They are best with food and can cause stomach upset if taken for more than a few days.

Safety:

If you are going home today you must not drive or operate equipment for at least 24 hours after the anaesthetic. Similarly you should not sign legal documents for this time. You must be accompanied home following your surgery and should have a companion for the first 24 hours after surgery who can assist you at home.