

## What else can I do for my pain?

You can apply cold packs for 15 minutes over the site. This helps to reduce inflammation.

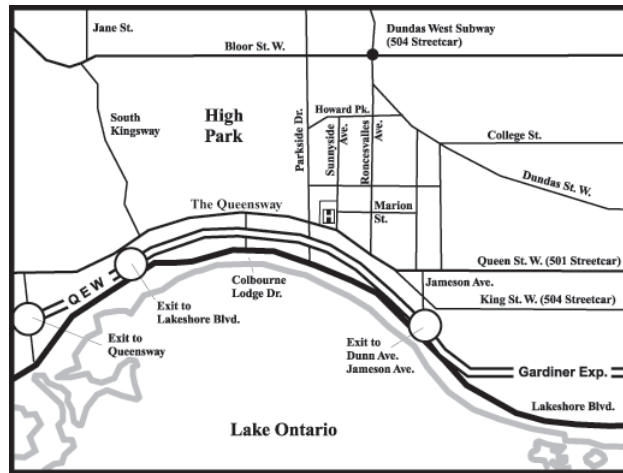
You can apply heat for 15 minutes over the site. This improves blood flow and helps to relieve pain.

You can do your exercises as instructed by the physiotherapist. Exercises will help restore strength and range of motion. Relaxation techniques, imagery, music and rest are other ways to help relieve pain.

## What should I do if the pain is not better with pain medications or other methods?

If you have uncontrolled pain it is very important for you to see a doctor. Your doctor can adjust your medications and may need to assess why you are having so much pain. Do not wait and hope that it will get better.

- Call your family doctor
- Call your surgeon
- Go to the Emergency department if your doctors are not available



**TTC from Dundas West subway station** - Take the subway to Dundas West station. Take the 504 streetcar southbound on Roncesvalles Ave. Get off at Marion St. and walk one block west to the Health Centre.

**Driving from west** – Take QEW East and exit at Lakeshore Blvd. From Lakeshore, turn left at Colborne Lodge. Turn right at The Queensway. The Health Centre is on the left. The parking garage entrance is located on Sunnyside Ave.

**Driving from east** – Take Don Valley Pkwy. to Gardiner Expressway West. Exit at Dunn Ave. Follow signs to Jameson Ave. and turn right on Jameson. Turn left at King St. Turn left at The Queensway. The Health Centre is on the right. The entrance to the parking garage is located on Sunnyside Ave.

# Managing Your Pain at Home After Surgery

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# Managing Your Pain

## Why is it important to manage my pain?

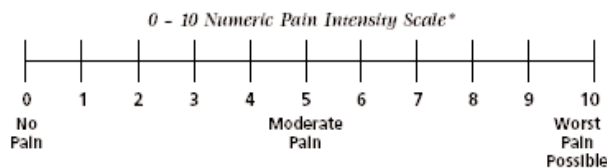
### Pain can:

- Increase the chance of complications
- Cause stress and delay healing
- Prevent you from being able to exercise and do your physical therapy
- Stop you from having a good night sleep
- Affect your quality of life
- Prevent you from returning to work

## How can I measure my pain?

Each person experiences pain very differently. Using a pain scale is a good way to measure your pain and help you decide when you should take pain medication. It is also a good way of judging if the pain medication is working. Usually a pain rating above 4 out of 10 makes it difficult for patients to carry out their normal activities or sleep.

You can use the following scale:



## Should I take my pain medication only when I have lot of pain?

No, do not wait for pain to get severe before taking pain medication. Pain is easier to

control when it is mild. If you wait until the pain is very bad it will take more time and much more pain medication to get the pain under control. Pain medication works the best when taken on a regular schedule as prescribed by your physician.

## Are all pain medications the same?

- a) Step One: for mild pain, try taking Tylenol® plain with an NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory). Some examples of NSAIDS are ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®) which you can buy over the counter. Your doctor may also prescribe Celebrex, Naproxen, Meloxicam or many others. It is important to read the label as each of these medications has a maximum dose that can be taken every 24 hours. These medications have very few side effects and will not cause you to feel sleepy. NSAIDS can be taken safely with Tylenol®.
- b) Step Two: if your pain is not well controlled with the step one medications you may need a prescription for a mild narcotic/opioid. Some examples are codeine and oxycodone. Some brand names are Tylenol® #2 or 3, Percocet® and Oxycocet®. Your doctor may suggest that you continue to take an NSAID with the narcotic.
- c) Step Three: if your pain is still not well controlled, then you need to visit your doctor and he/she may adjust your medications.

## What about the side effects from pain medications?

It is important for you to relieve your pain. Here are some tips to help with the side effects of pain medications:

- Constipation - drink more liquids, eat more fruits and vegetables and exercise. A laxative or a stool softener can be bought over the counter (i.e. Metamucil, Sennakot®). If you have had bowel surgery please consult with your surgeon before taking a laxative.
- Nausea and vomiting - this can be treated with medications over the counter (i.e. Gravol®).
- Sleepiness - this is normal and should stop after a few days. If you are sleepy, do not drive or operate any dangerous machinery.

## Can I get addicted to pain medications?

Addiction does not happen overnight. Addiction happens when people lose control over their use of pain medications and take these medications to satisfy a craving, to relax or to help them sleep. If you use your pain medication to relieve your pain only and as your doctor directed, it is extremely unlikely that you will become addicted. Fear of addiction should not stop you from taking your pain medication as this may delay your recovery.