



Pain Management After Your Procedure

All patients experience pain differently. Not all procedures require pain medication. This information sheet is to educate you on how to correctly manage your pain after surgery. Most patients do not require prescription pain medication after dermatology procedures.

The following over the counter medications can be found at your local CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens, or grocery store.

- 1) **Ibuprofen** – also known as: *Advil or Motrin*
- 2) **Acetaminophen** – also known as: *Tylenol*

How are they different?

- **Ibuprofen** – is an anti-inflammatory, pain reliever, and fever reducer. It is also cleared or broken down by your kidneys.
- **Acetaminophen** – is a pain reliever and a fever reducer *but* does not act as an anti-inflammatory therapy. It is cleared or broken down by the liver.

What is the recommended dosing of these medication?

Acetaminophen (the maximum dose is 4 grams per day)

325 mg tablets: 1-2 pills every 6 hours (do not exceed 12 tablets in a 24-hour period)

500 mg tablets (extra strength): 1-2 pills every 8 hours (you cannot exceed 3 doses in 24 hours)

Ibuprofen (the maximum dose is 2400 mg per day)

200 mg tablets: 1-2 pills every 6 – 8 hours (you should not exceed 12 tablets in 24 hours)

Is it safe to take these medications together?

Studies have shown that these drug combinations work best when used correctly to relieve surgical pain, in most cases, better than prescription narcotic drugs. Because your body breaks down these medications in different organs, it is considered safe to stagger these medications, or take them within a couple of hours of each other (see example on next page).

Schedule Example (separate Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen doses by 3-4 hours)

12:00 – Tylenol 325 mg 2 tablets (total dose 650 mg)

3:00 – Ibuprofen 200 mg 2 pills (total dose 400 mg)

6:00 – Tylenol 325 mg 2 tablets (total dose 650 mg)

9:00 – Ibuprofen 200 mg 2 pills (total dose 400 mg)

- In this example – we are assuming you had early morning surgery and are arriving home in time to take an early afternoon dose of medication. There is still room for another dose of medication if needed either before or after without going over the exceeded dose of either medication.
- **If you take Extra Strength Tylenol, you should follow the 8-hour schedule for this medication and you may take Ibuprofen in between at 6-hour intervals.**