

## Pain Management Following Surgery

Remember, pain is your friend! It makes you protect what is painful. If you step on a nail, you learn that pain will guard you from similar sharp objects in the future. Pain in the area of your surgery is a normal response to surgery.

**1<sup>st</sup> Phase** (1-7 days after surgery) Initial pain for the first 7 days is called the inflammatory phase. It will be sore! If you were prescribed pain medication (opioid), Toradol (ketorolac), which is a strong anti-inflammatory medication, or any other medications for pain, you can use this at this time. Please purchase Tylenol (acetaminophen) at the store. Unless otherwise informed, you may start taking Tylenol 500 mg, 2 tablets, three times a day (every 8 hours).

**Examples of anti-inflammatory medications: Advil (Ibuprofen, Motrin), Aleve (Naproxen Sodium), Aspirin.**

- ❖ If you had a nerve block or a pain ball, you may start the Toradol (ketorolac) the evening of surgery and continue for 3 days but be sure to take it WITH FOOD. You may start using your prescription pain medication (opioid) after the block has worn off or discontinued.
- ❖ Using Anti-inflammatory medications, which you can purchase at the store, can really help at this time **IF given the OK by your surgeon**. Ice and Tylenol (acetaminophen) will also help. **DO NOT TAKE TORADOL WITH ANY OTHER ANTI-INFLAMMATORY MEDICATION.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Phase** (less than 8 weeks after surgery) Pain will occur naturally when slowly progressing in OT/PT (hand therapy or physical therapy, IF prescribed) or with your home exercise program while stretching and inflammation occurs. Tylenol, ice, and anti-inflammatories (see list above) can be helpful now. You should start weaning from your opioid medication.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Phase** (more than 8 weeks) For soreness and aches during day and night, Tylenol and Anti-Inflammatories will help the most. No opioids.

- ❖ Pain medications for sleep may actually contribute to re-injuring yourself by blunting your normal pain response. If you move and are sore, you will be more careful. If you feel no pain at all due to overuse of pain medications, you may re-injure yourself because you don't have normal sensation.
- ❖ Nerve blocks and pain ball blocks NORMALLY cause a loss of sensation in the extremity where block is placed. You will experience numbness or tingling in that extremity. Sensation will normally return after the block is removed or has worn off.

