



Managing Pain after Your Cesarean (C-section)

A C-section delivery is a major surgery. Most women need pain medication after the birth. Controlling pain makes it easier to feed and take care of your baby. Pain can stop you from wanting to walk or take deep breaths which can make it easier for you to get blood clots or chest infections (pneumonia).

There are several medicines that can help with pain after surgery. These medicines work better together than a high dose of one medicine by itself. It can be hard to remember what medicines you have taken. The sheet below will help you keep track.

Ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) and acetaminophen (Tylenol)

These two medicines can be taken at the same time, and they have few side effects. We recommend taking ibuprofen and acetaminophen together on a schedule, 4 times each day, for 2 weeks after you leave the hospital. Missing doses increases the chances of feeling worse pain. A stronger medication (Narcotic/Opioid) may be needed to help reduce the pain if you have a missed dose. Narcotics have more side effects for you and the baby. Remember to take food with Ibuprofen since it can upset your stomach.

You should not take ibuprofen if you have bleeding in your stomach or intestines, a clotting disorder, severe kidney disease, an allergy to aspirin or NSAIDS, or have had gastric bypass surgery.

You should not take acetaminophen if you have liver disease or an allergy to acetaminophen.

Opioid pain medications: Oxycodone, hydrocodone or hydromorphone

Opioids can make you sleepy, nauseated, and constipated. Only take opioids if your pain is not controlled with ibuprofen and acetaminophen. Bring any opioid pills that you have left over the outpatient pharmacy at UNC Hospital or UNC Hillsborough. They will get rid of them properly so no harm occurs to anyone else (<http://bit.ly/UNCMedSafe>), or return them to an Operation Medicine Drop location (<http://bit.ly/NCMedDrop>). There is a risk that these medications can be misused and become habit forming. Always use these opioid painkillers as directed by a health care provider.

Breastfeeding and medication

Many moms want to know if these medications are safe for their baby if they breastfeed. All these medications are in breast milk in small amounts. When taking your medicine as ordered, the amount is small and is safe for your baby. If your baby is not waking for feedings (8 or more feedings every day), is limp or is feeding poorly, call your baby's provider right away.

Healing after your C-section

It's important to get rest and eat well after your c-section. Ask friends and family to help with household tasks and care for older children in the home. Encourage visitors to bring a meal or help with chores. At night, it may help to set up "shifts" with your support person for a 5-6 hour period. During this time, the support person can bring baby to you to breastfeed while you are resting in bed. Then, you can go back to sleep while another caregiver takes care of burping, diaper changes, and settling your baby.

When to call your provider

Your pain should gradually get better. Call your provider if:

- Your pain is getting worse or you need more oxycodone than the day before.
- You have a fever of 101 F (38.3 Celsius) or higher
- The skin around your incision is turning pink or red
- Your incision opens
- There is blood or any fluid is draining from your incision

During regular business hours, call your prenatal care provider. After hours and weekends, call the UNC page operator, 984-974-1000, and ask for the OB provider on call.

Approved by NC Women's Hospital Patient Education Committee, March 5th, 2018

Your Pain Medications

You can use this chart to keep track of when you've taken your pain medication.

	Day Dose # / Time	Ibuprofen 600 mg, every 6 hours	Acetaminophen 650 mg, every 6 hours	Your pain, on a scale of 0-10	Oxycodone 5 mg, if your pain is greater than 4
Discharge Day					
	1 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	2 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	3 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	4 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
Day 1 after discharge					
	1 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	2 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	3 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	4 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
Day 2 after discharge					
	1 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	2 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	3 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	4 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
Day 3 after discharge					
	1 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	2 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	3 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	4 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
Day 4 after discharge					
	1 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	2 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	3 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	4 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
Day 5 after discharge					
	1 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	2 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	3 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	4 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
Day 6 after discharge					
	1 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	2 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	3 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()
	4 /	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		()