Managing your pain at home

**Having your pain controlled is important to your recovery and will help you function at your best.**

Your pain will decrease as your body heals. Make sure to follow your doctor’s instructions on how much activity you can do. Have help available to assist with activities that may cause your pain to become worse. Take frequent rest breaks the first few days you are home. Talk to your doctor or nurse about other things you can use along with your pain medicine to help with your pain; this may include heat or cold packs, listening to music, using pillows for support and deep breathing.

**Take your pain medication exactly as prescribed**

You will be given information about each medicine that you take. The following information will help make sure the medicine is safe and effective for you.

- Make sure you understand if your pain medicine should be taken on a regular basis (scheduled) or "as needed"
- Never take more medicine than what is prescribed
- Tell your doctor if your pain medicine is not working
- It is easier to control your pain if you take medicine before your pain becomes severe
- Avoid drinking alcohol while using pain medicines
- Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, herbs or nutritional supplements

**Report any side effects to your doctor**

Most side effects to pain medicines are not serious and often go away in a few days. If you experience nausea, vomiting, constipation, itching or have difficulty urinating for more than a day or two, tell your doctor.

**Stop taking your medicine and notify your doctor right away if you:**

- Are too sleepy
- Have slowed breathing
- Develop a rash
- Notice any bleeding
How to safely store your medication
- Keep in original bottle with cap tightly closed
- Keep away from heat, light and moisture
- Keep away from children and pets
- Good places to store medicines include:
  - A safe or other locked box or locked drawer
  - Top shelf of a hallway or bedroom closet
  - Top shelf of a kitchen cabinet furthest away from stove
- Do NOT store medicine in your bathroom medicine cabinet
- Do NOT store medicine above your stove
- Do NOT store medicine in a hot car

Safely disposing of unused medication
- Always get rid of expired, unwanted or unused medicine as soon as possible
- Do NOT share your medicine with anyone
- Talk to your pharmacist or call the local police station about how to get rid of extra medications
- Look for national drug take-back days where you can bring your unused medications

Notes: