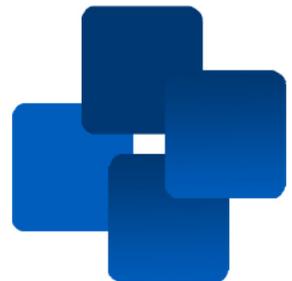


## **Patient Information**

# **Controlling Your Pain After Surgery**

## **Paracetamol and Codeine**

Pharmacy Department



The purpose of this leaflet is to help you to control any pain you might have during your recovery at home. Please read it carefully.

## How to take your medicines

In the first few days after the surgery, take your medicines regularly, even if you are not in pain. All painkillers work best if taken early so that they stop you feeling pain rather than treating pain once you can already feel it.

You may need to take painkillers before doing some physical activity, like walking. You should take the painkillers about one hour before you start the activity.

## You have been advised to take two painkillers when you go home:

- ⇒ **Paracetamol 500mg tablets (or capsules/caplets)**
- ⇒ **Codeine 30mg tablets**

## After going home, when can I take my next painkillers?

Your nurse will tell you when to take your first painkillers after you get home - see below:

<b>Paracetamol</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Time</b>	

<b>Codeine</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Time</b>	

(Nurse to complete tables above)

## Information about the painkillers

### Paracetamol 500mg tablets

Paracetamol is a commonly used medicine (painkiller) for treating mild or moderate pain. You can take two tablets every four hours, but **do not take more than eight tablets in 24 hours**.

Never take other medicines containing paracetamol at the same time as the paracetamol tablets you have been advised to take. This includes medicines that you can buy from the supermarket or pharmacy. If you are unsure, please check the information leaflet inside the package, or ask your pharmacist.

### Codeine 30mg tablets

Codeine is a good painkiller for mild to moderate pain. You can take one or two tablets every four hours, but **do not take more than eight tablets in 24 hours**.

Codeine should only be taken as a '**top up**' or '**rescue**' painkiller if paracetamol is not sufficient to control your pain.

Never take other medicines containing codeine or dihydrocodeine at the same time as the codeine tablets you have been instructed to take. This includes medicines that you can buy from the supermarket or pharmacy. If you are unsure, please check the information leaflet inside the package, or ask your pharmacist.

Codeine may make you feel light-headed, dizzy or drowsy. Make sure you are at home when you take the tablets for the first time, so that you can lie down if you need to. Codeine may also make you feel sick. Lying down and closing your eyes in a quiet place may help you with this. The feeling of drowsiness and sickness should wear off as your body gets used to codeine.

Codeine can also cause constipation. It helps to eat plenty of fruit, vegetables and cereals, and drink plenty of fluids. You may need to take some laxatives, speak to a pharmacist for advice. If you have been prescribed a laxative, please take it as prescribed.

## The best way to take these medicines is as follows:

<b>Breakfast</b>	2 x 500mg paracetamol (plus 1 or 2 x 30mg codeine, if required)
<b>Lunch</b>	2 x 500mg paracetamol (plus 1 or 2 x 30mg codeine, if required)
<b>Dinner</b>	2 x 500mg paracetamol (plus 1 or 2 x 30mg codeine, if required)
<b>Bedtime</b>	2 x 500mg paracetamol (plus 1 or 2 x 30mg codeine, if required)

Take your painkillers regularly for \_\_\_\_\_ days and as you recover from surgery, and do not feel any pain, you can slowly reduce the number of tablets that you are taking.

Please refer to page 6 - '**How to stop taking your medicines**'.

## Keep a Record

You can use this chart to record the painkillers that you take. This will also make sure that you do not take too many tablets. Tick the box when you take each drug or mark in how many tablets you have taken - **Day 0** is the day of surgery.

Day	Painkiller	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Bedtime
Day 0	Paracetamol				
	Codeine				
Day 1	Paracetamol				
	Codeine				
Day 2	Paracetamol				
	Codeine				
Day 3	Paracetamol				
	Codeine				
Day 4	Paracetamol				
	Codeine				
Day 5	Paracetamol				
	Codeine				
Day 6	Paracetamol				
	Codeine				

## **What should I do if I miss a dose?**

If you are in pain, take a dose as soon as you remember. If it is nearly time for your next dose, wait until then and do not take the missed dose. Never take two doses of the same painkiller together. Take the remaining doses at the correct time.

## **Drinking alcohol**

Do not drink alcohol while taking codeine. The mixture may make you feel very drunk and likely to fall over or accidentally injure yourself. You may drink alcohol when taking only paracetamol.

## **How to stop taking your medicines**

If you were taking painkillers regularly before surgery, you may need to carry on taking the same amount of painkillers after the surgery. Please speak to the doctor or nurse, or ask your pharmacist.

Take your painkillers regularly. As you recover from surgery and do not feel any pain, you can slowly reduce the number of tablets that you are taking.

It is always best to take paracetamol regularly until you no longer need painkillers. If you are not feeling much pain, reduce the painkillers in the following order:

1. Codeine - only take occasionally if needed as a 'top up', but continue to take paracetamol regularly.
2. Paracetamol - only stop taking this regularly once you are not taking any other painkillers.

Record the doses you do take on the chart so that you can monitor your progress and know when you can have 'top up' painkillers if you need to.

## **Where can I get painkillers from?**

Paracetamol can be bought at pharmacies and supermarkets. You may need to see your GP if you need more codeine or if you need to take painkillers for a long time after surgery.

**Please use this space to write down your notes:**

