

# Stop!

Do not take prescription pain medications before you read this document.

The following pain medications have a narcotic component and are very strong.

Tylenol with codeine (codeine)	Percocet (oxycodone)
Lortab, Norco and Vicodin (hydrocodone)	Ultram (tramadol)

Narcotic pain medications are very effective with surgical pain, but can be associated with side effects. Narcotic pain medication will typically cause drowsiness and disorientation; you should not drive or operate machinery while taking these medications.

The above medications contain acetaminophen; please follow instructions closely so as to avoid side effects from high doses of that medication.

Another side effect that we see in our patients who take these medications is nausea and vomiting. It is quite bothersome to patients who already do not feel well after surgery to become nauseous. It is impossible to predict and prevent nausea for each particular patient. Because of the risk of nausea we suggest that these medications be used **ONLY** when Tylenol (acetaminophen) and ibuprofen taken on a regular basis do not adequately address post surgical pain.

If you decide to take narcotic pain medication, then you must understand that there is a real chance that you may become nauseous and this will complicate pain control efforts.

Several suggestions regarding the use of narcotic pain medications (such as those above) are as follows:

- Take these pain medications only when food is in the stomach.
- Try one tablet at a time before taking two at a time
- Rest (do not move around) after taking these medications.

If nausea develops, do not take more of the narcotic medication until your stomach settles. Tylenol may be taken, but doses of the ibuprofen should be minimized while the stomach is upset as this medication may make stomach upset worse.

Nausea following the administration of one of these narcotic medications may persist for up to 24 hours following the last dose; this nausea will usually go away without medical treatment over this 24 hour period. Continued attempts at taking food and fluid will help in resolving persistent nausea. Medications are available to counteract the nausea and vomiting, but these medications, like all medications, are associated with possible side effects that can be bothersome. When these medications are taken by mouth, they may not stay down and, therefore, will not be helpful; suppositories are often the best option in this situation.

## Information about selected analgesics

### Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

Adults should not take more than 1 gram (1000 mg) of acetaminophen per dose. The maximum recommended daily dose of acetaminophen is 3 grams (3000 mg).

The following medications contain acetaminophen and care should be taken to stay within recommended dosing guidelines:

Tylenol with codeine, Vicodin, Norco, Lortab and Percocet.

Because the above medications already contain acetaminophen, additional doses of acetaminophen should not be taken.

For further information go to: [www.drugs.com/acetaminophen.html](http://www.drugs.com/acetaminophen.html)

### Ibuprofen (Advil)

Normal adult dosing for pain control is 400-600 mg per dose. The maximum daily dose of ibuprofen is 3200 mg. The use of ibuprofen can cause significant stomach upset and nausea. Ibuprofen should not be taken at the same time as blood thinners or aspirin unless specifically directed to do so.

For further information go to: [www.drugs.com/ibuprofen.html](http://www.drugs.com/ibuprofen.html)

### Aspirin

Normal dosing for pain control for adults is 650 mg. The maximum daily dose of aspirin is 4 grams (4000 mg). The use of aspirin can cause significant stomach upset and nausea. Aspirin should not be taken with blood thinners unless specifically directed to do so. Aspirin should not be taken at the same time as NSAIDS such as ibuprofen unless specifically directed to do so. If your physician has directed you to take aspirin on a daily basis, it should not be discontinued without specific instructions from that physician.

For further information go to: [www.drugs.com/aspirin.html](http://www.drugs.com/aspirin.html)

### Percocet and Vicodin (oxycodone and hydrocodone / acetaminophen)

Percocet and Vicodin contain acetaminophen and care should be taken not to exceed maximum daily doses of each medication. Both medications can cause significant stomach upset and nausea. Alcoholic beverages should not be consumed while taking either of these medications. Neither Percocet or Vicodin should not be taken with additional doses of acetaminophen. Refill prescriptions for hydrocodone and oxycodone based preparations can no longer be called into pharmacies.

For further information go to: [www.drugs.com/percocet.html](http://www.drugs.com/percocet.html) or [www.drugs.com/vicodin.html](http://www.drugs.com/vicodin.html)