



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

ASPAN Patient Information:

Pain Management

What is the plan for helping me deal with my pain when I am hurting?

Before you have surgery, it is natural to wonder if you are going to have pain or hurt after your procedure. It is normal to experience some pain, but you should not have to deal with severe pain after any surgery. Your doctors and nurses will make sure that you know how to take care of your pain after your surgery. It is important to control your pain after your procedure to help make your recovery faster.

What does effective pain treatment mean?

Effective treatment of pain will help you get better faster, help you go home sooner and, hopefully, go back to your normal activities. People can have different pain from others even when they have the same surgery. It is important to talk about how to control your pain with your doctor before your surgery. Let the doctors know what type of ways you have used in the past to help control your pain.

How do I report my pain?

If you are hurting and have pain, tell someone! When you are recovering, your nurses will often ask you to give your pain a number from a scale of 0-10, with “0” being “you have no pain” and “10” being “the worst pain you ever had or can imagine.” Giving your pain a number helps the nurses know how well your pain is being managed and if your plan with your doctor is working. If the number scale is confusing to you or does not make sense, there are other ways to let the nurses know how much pain you are having. Please let them know.

What other techniques will be used to help treat my pain after surgery while I am in the hospital?

PCA (Patient Controlled Analgesia)—this tool allows patients to give themselves intravenous (through IV) pain relief immediately. There is a special push button that is attached to a small pump that was programmed by the nurse. When the patient pushes the button, medicine is released from the pump into the IV line.

Epidural Analgesia—a constant flow of pain-relieving medication to the nerves within the epidural space of the spinal column.

PCEA (Patient Controlled Epidural Analgesia)—gives the patient constant pain medicine through IV and allows patients to give themselves extra medicine, if needed.

Nerve Block—a nerve block is used when a patient has surgery on a smaller part of the body, such as arm, leg, or shoulder. Local anesthetics are injected near the nerves around where the surgery is being performed to “numb” the surgical area.

Pain Medications Taken Orally—medicine that the patient will swallow by mouth. There will be directions on the medication bottle and instructions from the pharmacy on how to take.

Intravenous (IV) Pain Medication—medicine that a patient is given by IV injection acts quickly, but does not last too long.

If my pain is under control, what else do I need to know?

When your pain is under control, your body can focus on the most important work: healing. Take your medication as soon as you need it. This is not the time to test to see how much pain you can stand. Work with your nurses and doctors to make sure your recovery is as quick and pain-free as possible.