

## **Managing Pain after Surgery or Injury:**

A multimodal regimen **targets different sources of pain in the pathway from body to brain**. When used in the **right combination**, this approach reduces the need for higher-risk medications like opioids, keeping you **safer with fewer side effects**. The regimen outlined here is generalized, and yours may be tailored to your specific needs based on age, lab results and other medical history.

**Note for Nerve Blocks:** Nerve block may last anywhere from **24-72 hours** depending on the technique and type of medication used. You will experience an increase in pain or sensation of pressure as the block wears off. Use the medications as outlined below.

### **The Levels of Pain Medications According to Dr. Trevor Stefanski:**

#### **Level 0: Rest, Ice, Elevation, Compression: Reduces Swelling**

- Often underestimated. **Don't skip this step!**

**\*Bonus:** During the first 2 weeks, Dr. Stefanski may prescribe **tranexamic acid (TXA)**, which works to prevent microscopic bleeding to help with swelling. \*

**Level 1: Acetaminophen (Tylenol)** - blocks pain centrally, is well-tolerated, does not affect the stomach, and has very few side effects.

- Tylenol 1000mg every 8 hours, maximum 3000mg daily (2000mg daily if you have cirrhosis)

**Level 2: Anti-Inflammatory Medications** – reduces inflammatory component of pain. **Choose ONLY 1 from this level** to prevent severe stomach irritation or worse

- **Ibuprofen** max 600mg every 6-8 hours (400mg max if over 65 years old)
- **Naproxen** max 500mg every 12 hours (250mg max if over 65 years old)
- **Meloxicam or diclofenac** as prescribed
- **Prednisone** or other steroids

**Level 3: Cannabidiol (CBD)** targets the endocannabinoid pathway, and offers natural and nonaddicting relief.

- Helpful for **nerve pain, anxiety, reduce need for addictive narcotics**, and can **improve sleep quality** and **reduces inflammation** as well
- **Note:** Over-the-counter CBD products often contain small amounts of THC that can have mind-altering effects and may cause a positive drug test.
- Dr. Stefanski recommends Corganics products, which are high quality pure CBD without THC. Visit Corganics.com and use provider code STEFANSKI for access

**Level 4: Pregabalin (Lyrica) and Gabapentin** - Stabilizes nerve membranes of the microscopic nerves that are unavoidable with any incision.

- Lyrica 75-150 mg twice daily for 2-4 weeks is typical

**Level 5: Muscle Relaxers** (Optional) - Reduces muscle spasm but can be a little sedating

- **Methocarbamol – Use as prescribed** (500-1000mg every 8 hours)
  - Discontinue when spasms resolve.

**Level 6: Opioids - Blocks pain receptors directly**

- Oxycodone, hydrocodone, percocet, vicodin, etc... Use as prescribed
- **These have the most side effects**, including constipation, nausea, itching, and respiratory depression. They can be **addictive**, and studies show that **even a short three-day regimen can begin to induce physiological dependence!**
- It is essential to use opioids sparingly and to wean off them as soon as possible to minimize the risk of side effects and dependence.
- These **medications may contain a mixture of acetaminophen (tylenol)** so its important to calculate that into your maximum tylenol daily dose

It is unrealistic to expect to be completely pain free after surgery. The goal is to get you to a manageable level where you are able to sleep at night and function during your day. Please call the office if you are struggling with acceptable pain control and we will troubleshoot or adjust your regimen