



You are going home from the emergency department with some pain. This sheet explains how to use pain relief safely and other ways to ease pain while you recover. Follow any specific advice your doctor gave you about your injury or illness.

What is it?

Some pain is normal after an injury or illness and usually eases day by day. The aim is not always to remove all pain, but to keep it low enough that you can rest, sleep, move and breathe deeply. Moving gently usually helps recovery. Taking pain relief regularly for the first few days often works better than waiting until the pain is bad.

Looking after yourself at home

- Rest the painful area at first, then move it gently as advised.
- Use ice wrapped in a cloth for new injuries, or a warm pack for stiff, aching muscles.
- Raise an injured arm or leg to reduce swelling.
- Distraction helps: music, talking, gentle walking or slow deep breathing.
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

Medicines

- Paracetamol is safe for most people, unless your doctor told you not to. Follow the packet, and check other medicines do not contain it.
- Ibuprofen may also help, unless your doctor told you not to. Avoid it with a stomach ulcer, kidney disease, some asthma, or pregnancy.
- Stronger painkillers can cause drowsiness and constipation. Do not drive or drink alcohol with them, and use them only as prescribed.
- Stop stronger painkillers first as the pain improves. Return unused medicine to a pharmacy.

Follow-up

- See your family doctor or health centre if the pain is not improving after a few days.
- See them if the pain stops you sleeping, eating or doing simple daily things.
- Bring all your medicines with you so your doctor can check them.

Come back to the emergency department or call an ambulance straight away if:

- Pain that suddenly gets much worse, or new pain in a different place
- Swelling of the lips, face or tongue, a spreading rash, or trouble breathing after a medicine
- Very drowsy, hard to wake, or breathing slowly after a painkiller
- Vomiting blood, or black, sticky stools
- An injured limb becomes cold, pale, blue or numb



Scan to read this sheet on your phone

This leaflet is general information to support the advice your doctor or nurse gave you today. It does not replace their advice. If you are worried, seek medical help.

EM Orbit · Emergency medicine, in one orbit · pain-management-en