



Pain Management for Children and Adults

After a dental procedure, you or your child may experience some pain or discomfort. This is a normal part of the healing process. Some common dental procedures that may require pain management include oral surgery, tooth extractions and root canal therapy. Use the information below as a guide to work with your dentist to help safely manage pain.

Know your pain management options

The pain caused by most dental procedures usually doesn't last more than a few days and can often be managed with over-the-counter pain medications like ibuprofen and acetaminophen.

Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that helps reduce pain and swelling after treatment. You can take NSAIDs shortly before your dental procedure to help minimize pain.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is another common pain relief medication. It's used to decrease fever and pain, but unlike ibuprofen, acetaminophen does not reduce inflammation that may lead to pain.

Share family and personal health history

If there's a history of addiction in your family, let your dentist know. Research shows genetics or biological factors play a key role in the development of addictions. Knowing your family history helps your dentist provide better care and pain management.

Additionally, tell your dentist if you have a personal history of addiction. You worked hard to be healthy. Sharing your journey helps your dentist ensure you stay on the path to wellness.

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Ask your dentist

If your dentist prescribes an opioid medication, here are some questions to ask:

1. Are there non-opioid alternatives that can appropriately manage the pain and swelling?
2. What is the least amount of medication I or my child can take, for the shortest amount of time, to best manage pain and swelling?
3. What are the side effects and risks of the medication, including addiction?
4. What are the potential drug interactions with other medications?
5. What else can be done to manage pain and swelling?

6. How do I securely store medication?

7. How do I properly dispose of any unused medication?

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