

## General Surgery Discussion Guide

### **How will my pain after surgery be managed?**

There are many options to help control your pain after surgery. Ask your doctor what the best plan is for you.

### **How can I minimize the need for opioids? What non-opioid options do I have?**

There are a variety of medications you may receive before, during and after surgery to minimize your need for opioids. They may include non-opioids, such as NSAIDs like aspirin or ibuprofen or local anesthetics that are injected during a procedure and numb the area around the surgical site. Check with your doctor to see what options are right for you.

### **What do you need to know about me to help customize my pain management?**

Your medical history (e.g., medication allergies, breathing/respiratory issues, stomach/GI issues, previous history of substance abuse, current medications you are taking, etc.) will help your surgeon better understand your treatment needs. Also informing your surgeon about your living situation (e.g., caregiver, resides alone, access to transportation, needs to use stairs, etc.) will help them to understand your specific needs and create a better pain management plan for you.

### **Is this procedure associated with a lot of pain?**

Ask your doctor about the level of pain that is typically associated with your surgery, so you know what to expect afterwards.

### **When I return home, what guidelines do I have/what restrictions should I follow? When can I get back to my normal activities?**

Understanding when you can resume your normal activities is an important part of your recovery. Ask your doctor when you can get back to everyday activities (e.g., returning to work, food/dietary restrictions, exercising, driving, etc.). There may be things you can do on your own that can help speed your recovery (e.g., proper wound care, physical therapy, etc.).

### **How long will it take to fully recover from surgery? What will it involve?**

The recovery from surgery is personal and can vary depending on the surgery performed, your overall health and you. Talk to your doctor about what you will need after your surgery.

### **What happens when the medications from surgery wear off?**

Ask your doctor about any pain or discomfort you may feel after surgery and make sure you have a plan in place. Also, see if non-opioid options are available to manage your pain during the first few days following surgery, often when pain is at its peak.

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### If You're Prescribed An Opioid, Ask These Questions:

- Is this safe to take with my other medications?
- Is this the lowest appropriate dose/number of pills?
- When can I stop taking this, and how should I wean off?
- How can I properly dispose of the pills if I don't use all of them?