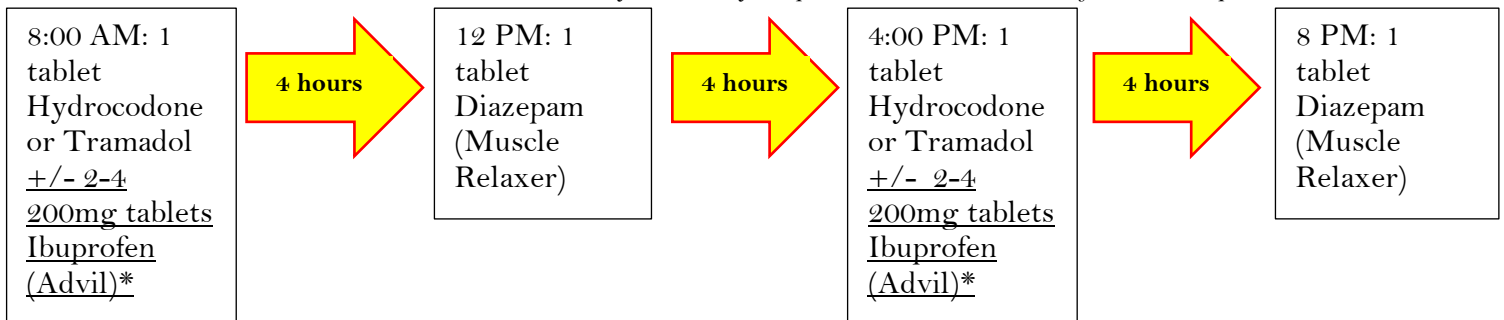


HOW TO TAKE YOUR PAIN MEDICATION AFTER SURGERY:

- Please take the pain medication as directed for the first 5-7 days (typically this is Hydrocodone, unless you reported an allergy to this medication, in which case you were most likely prescribed Tramadol instead). For the first week, we recommend you take this pain medication every 6-8 hours as needed for pain. Take it with food. After about a week, take this pain medication only if you have severe pain. If the prescription pain medication is too strong for your pain needs, over the counter ibuprofen (400-800mg every 6-8 hours) can be substituted.
- In addition, you were most likely given a muscle relaxant medication called Diazepam (also known as Valium). This medication can also be taken every 6-8 hours and is especially useful for muscle spasms and to help prevent the aggregation of the pain cycle.
- **In order to best combat your pain, we recommend you alternate your pain medication (Hydrocodone or Tramadol) and your muscle relaxer (Diazepam) every 3-4 hours.** For example: Take one Hydrocodone or Tramadol tablet with your breakfast in the morning and then 3-4 hours later take your muscle relaxer (Diazepam). Three to 4 hours after you take your muscle relaxer, you can take your second dose of Hydrocodone or Tramadol and so on.
- You should not be driving or operating heavy machinery while you are taking Hydrocodone, Tramadol or Diazepam as these are all controlled substances that can cause dizziness, drowsiness, and impaired judgement.
- **Pain medicine containing narcotics can cause constipation.** Occasionally this can be extremely uncomfortable and painful. To avoid this, over the counter Colace can help prevent constipation. Miralax and Magnesium Citrate can also be taken in more severe cases.

Pain Medication Regimen:

* Times medication are taken will vary based on your personal schedule. This is just an example. *



- *You only need to take Ibuprofen with your Hydrocodone or Tramadol if your pain is not being managed when taking Tramadol or Hydrocodone alone.
- Once you get to a point where you feel your pain is not severe (typically this is around 5-7 days after surgery, but it is okay if its longer or shorter than this!), you can either:
 - #1. Step down to half a tablet of Hydrocodone or Tramadol +/- 400-800 mg Ibuprofen (Advil) every 6-8 hours.
 - #2. OR stop your Hydrocodone or Tramadol all together and replace it with 400-800mg of Ibuprofen (Advil) every 6-8 hours
- You can continue to alternate with the muscle relaxer every 4 hours as seen below. You can also stop taking the muscle relaxer (Diazepam) at any point when you feel comfortable. Since the muscle relaxer can often times make you sleepy, it is a good idea to try and take this medication sometime before bed, especially in the first week following surgery when sleeping can often times be uncomfortable.

Step Down Regimen:

