

# Ada Bone & Joint Clinic brings you Common Sense in Medicine

## If It Doesn't Hurt, Don't!

### It Doesn't Have To Hurt.

If it doesn't hurt you don't have to take the pain medication. Its common sense but I sometimes have to explain that concept to my patients. Most patients expect to have pain after surgery. Since the surgical techniques I use relieve the pain so well, the pain after surgery is minor and usually doesn't require "pain" meds. My patients take Tylenol and Ibuprofen or nothing at all.

For years I have been giving all my post-operative patients a prescription for pain meds. But when I ask them if they needed to take it, 95% said they had not taken any of it (even though they had already spent the money). This has been true not only for laser knee surgeries, carpal tunnels, and shoulder surgeries but also total knee replacements.

Now I ask my patients to call me if they need to take any of the pain medicine even if it is in the middle of the night. Because it is so unusual

it might mean something is really wrong and that I might need to see them.

Other orthopedic surgeons use heavy doses of narcotics after their procedures to control their patient's pain. This means the patients are sleepier, slower to get up and move about, often see things that are not there, have weird dreams and are more likely to fall when they do get up.

There is another big advantage to not having to use narcotics to control the pain. When narcotics are used they cover up the pain instead of dealing with the cause. The patient may then do something that makes the injury worse without realizing it. When the narcotic wears off the patient *really* hurts and has to take even more pain killers this time to get relief.

Instead of asking for their pharmacy number when patients call my office I want to know where they hurt, what it feels like, when it started. I want to figure out the cause of the pain to stop it. **Do it right, it doesn't have to hurt.**

**By David Hubler MD**



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