



## Do I Need an Opioid?

Why Do I Have Pain?	Do I Need an Opioid?	What Else Can I Do for My Pain?
Low back pain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muscle strain</li> <li>• Herniated disc</li> <li>• Sciatica</li> </ul>	No	<p><b>Self-care:</b> Ice packs, heating pad or hot bath, walking, stretching, weight loss, in some cases physical therapy.</p> <p><b>Medication:</b> Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are more effective than opioids. Acute low back pain will improve with time no matter which medicines are used.</p>
Trauma/injury <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muscle pull</li> <li>• Joint sprain</li> <li>• Broken bone</li> <li>• Bruising</li> </ul>	No	<p><b>Self-care:</b> Ice packs, heating pad or hot bath, elevation of injured limb, rest, stretching.</p> <p><b>Medication:</b> Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and acetaminophen are effective. Topical treatments may help the pain as much as oral medicines. Rest, ice/heat, massage, and stretching may help the pain.</p>
Dental pain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tooth pulled</li> <li>• Infection</li> <li>• Filling/crown</li> <li>• Root canal</li> </ul>	No	<p><b>Self-care:</b> Rinse mouth with warm water; use cold compress to outside of cheek if pain is from trauma to a tooth.</p> <p><b>Medication:</b> Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and acetaminophen are effective.</p>
Surgery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abdominal surgery</li> <li>• Neurosurgery</li> <li>• Orthopedic surgery</li> </ul>	Maybe	<p><b>Self-care:</b> Will depend on the type of surgery.</p> <p><b>Medication:</b> Talk to your health care team about the options available for pain after you have surgery. In some cases, acetaminophen or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs may be used. A short course of an opioid may also be used. If opioids are prescribed, they should only be used as needed and in most cases for less than 5 days.</p>



### Over-the-Counter (OTC) Pain Medications\*

#### 1. Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

- Ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®)
- Naproxen (Aleve®)

#### 2. Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

\*Caution: You should not take two similar drugs such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen sodium together. Do not exceed the recommended dosage of a medication without consulting your health care provider.

Please call \_\_\_\_\_ with any questions or concerns.

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Text - 838255