



Research Article *of the Month*

Kelley-Quon LI, Kirkpatrick MG, Ricca RL, et al. (2020)
Guidelines for opioid prescribing in children and adolescents after surgery: an expert panel opinion.
JAMA Surg;2020. doi: 10.1001/jamasurg.2020.5045

In a Nutshell:

Multimodal pain management strategies can be an effective way to minimize the amount of opioids needed after surgery.

Children's need for opioid analgesia in the perioperative period should be carefully considered, with nonopioid medications being used first. Multimodal pain management strategies may help reduce opioid use and future misuse, especially among adolescents.

Children and caregivers should be educated about how to manage pain both before surgery and at home



The Details:

Following surgery, children and adolescents should receive as few opioids as possible to manage their pain. This can help minimize adverse events and future risk of opioid misuse or opioid use disorder. *These guidelines were developed by an expert American panel who reviewed relevant literature from the past 30 years.*

Pain management after surgery is a primary concern of both children and their caregivers, but they often receive less than 6 minutes of education on pain control on the day of surgery. Therefore, the expert panel recommends that pain management education begin before the day of surgery, with all members of the healthcare team relaying consistent messaging regarding how to manage children's postoperative pain.

The panel recommends that children and their caregivers are provided education about opioid-related adverse events and what to do if they occur when opioids are prescribed and used at home. Providing this information in written form can be helpful.

Caregivers and adolescents should be educated about how to dispose of leftover opioids in order to help minimize the risk of diversion or misuse. Reducing the amount of opioids prescribed and providing opportunities for safe disposal can help mitigate this risk.

Healthcare professionals should also consider alternatives to opioids when clinically appropriate. The use of nonopioid medications in the perioperative period can reduce a child's total need for opioids while in the hospital. Nonopioid analgesics should also be prescribed for at-home use when appropriate.

