**Sheffield Aches & Pains**

## Self help medication for acute pain

It is recommended that you approach taking painkillers in a stepwise manner as detailed below.

We recommend that you take painkillers regularly to allow you to keep your joints and muscles moving.

People worry about painkillers masking pain and causing more damage. This is very unlikely to happen -  you are more likely to prolong your condition if you stop moving and allow yourself to stiffen up, or move in an awkward and rigid manner.

You should avoid activities (eg lifting, prolonged sitting or standing) that obviously aggravate your pain.

If you need regular medication, and your condition does not improving over 5 -7 days, consult a health care professional. If your condition is improving you can continue to take medication until you are able to move normally without painkillers.

These are standard adult doses. For children or patients taking other medications, please check with a pharmacist or health care professional. These medications can be purchased from pharmacists and shops without a prescription.

**Step 1** – Paracetamol – 2 tablets (1g) taken up to 4 times a day (maximum 8 tablets a day)

**Step 2** – add Ibuprofen 400mg – 3-4x a day (maximum dose up to 2.4g every 24 hours). These can irritate the stomach lining, so best taken on a full stomach. These tablets can interfere with some medications and medical conditions so check with a pharmacist or your GP.

**Step 3** - substitute Co-codamol 8/500 strength for paracetamol. This has low dose codeine mixed with paracetamol. You must be careful not to exceed the maximum dose of paracetamol (no more than 8 tablets of either paracetamol or co-codamol in 24 hours)

Codeine can make you feel sick, or make you constipated. Take plenty of water, and fresh fruit when taking these. You may even need to take senna tablets or lactulose liquid to prevent constipation while you take these tablets.

For stronger medication you will need to consult your GP for a prescription.

Don't forget to use heat and ice as well