

Taking the pain out of trauma cases is doctor's goal

By Leslie Gullahorn, MD
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In a trauma case, pain is inevitable. It's my job as an orthopedic trauma surgeon, besides fixing broken bones, to ensure patients have proper pain management.

Pill and IV narcotics have been the standard of post-operative pain treatment for decades. Unfortunately, they come with side effects that many patients find intolerable, including: nausea, vomiting, confusion, constipation, inability to urinate, restricted ambulation, decreased participation with physical therapy and grogginess.

Under-treated pain also threatens complications including increased risk of blood clots and stress on the heart, and potential risk for increased infection rate. All of these slow the recovery process and keep patients in the hospital longer than necessary. Due to these problems with conventional pain treatment, I have adopted what I believe is a better approach to post-surgical pain management.

It's called ON-Q.

Several studies have proven that patients who use an ON-Q



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pain pump have more comfortable recoveries, decreased sleep disturbances, shortened time to ambulation, reduced hospital stay, greater mobility, and improved rehabilitation results than those who take narcotics alone.

In my experience, using the ON-Q has led to increased patient satisfaction with pain control, earlier

mobilization and reduced narcotic use (also lowering narcotic associated complications).

I use ON-Q C-bloc and ON-Q PainBuster for my patients depending on the type of case. Both processes are similar to a dentist injecting Novocain into your mouth creating a numbing effect. Because ON-Q directs the medication locally only into the area where the patient has pain, the rest of their body stays in a normal, comfortable state, without systemic effects, such as those experienced when patients take narcotics.

Dr. Leslie J. Gullahorn is an orthopedic surgeon with a specialty in trauma at multiple hospitals including Palomar Pomerado Health. Her goal is to treat trauma patients and fix their broken bones, in the most comfortable, painless way possible. She has been living in San Diego for six years and loves it.