### Medication recommendation

1. **Paracetamol**
   - and

2. **NSAIDs** – 5–7 days (if tolerated)

3. **Continue regular paracetamol**
   - If the pain remains poorly controlled, consider the addition of:

4. **Option A: Tramadol**
   - or
   - **Option B: Combination analgesics eg Panadeine Forte +/- Tramadol**
   - or
   - **Option C: Short-term opioid medication +/- Tramadol**

If severe pain persists after 4–5 weeks; review the patient's clinical presentation and re-consider the [triage and referral guideline](#) if required.

### Clinical notes

**Benzodiazepines**
- if low-dose benzodiazepines are indicated; restrict use to 3–5 days only
- caution: increased risk of respiratory depression if given with opioids

**Tramadol**
- consider contraindications including concurrent use of SSRIs
- dose can be incrementally increased to 400mg maximum (if minimal side effects); 300mg if >75 years. Best to avoid in patients with renal impairment
- may be switched to slow-release

**Combination analgesics**
- combination analgesics (eg Panadeine Forte) are not recommended for long term use

**Short-term opioid medication:**
- can be considered in exceptional cases of severe pain eg Oxycodone (immediate-release) in age-related doses
- the treating doctor must consider on an individual basis if the prescription of opioid medication is appropriate
- it is strongly recommended that in most cases opioid medication is not taken for more than one week. The daily dose should be progressively decreased
- see downloadable information sheet: [Information for patients given Oxycodone](#)

### Important:
These guidelines are recommendations only and may not be appropriate for all patients. Be aware of the potential for interactions between these medications and other medications being taken by the patient, and co-morbidities that may increase the risk of adverse effects. If further advice is required, please contact the Royal Adelaide Hospital Pain Clinic, Tel. (08) 8222 5403 (weekdays).

For more information email: RAHspine@health.sa.gov.au Date of development: June 2011