

Managing Pain

What is Pain?

- Pain is a feeling only you can describe because you are the one feeling it.
- It can affect your body, emotions, or even your spirit. Pain can also cause stress in other areas.
- Pain can feel different for everyone. Some words to describe pain are aching, burning, gnawing, shooting, dull, or cramping.
- People who are confused or unable to speak might show pain by pacing, moaning, looking upset, or making faces like a furrowed brow.
- Pain can also affect the people who care about you, like your family and friends.

What can you do to help with pain?

There are many ways to treat pain. Your care team will ask questions to learn what's causing your pain and talk about treatment options with you. Medicine is often part of the plan, and your nurse will teach you how to use it safely.

- Take the medicine exactly as your doctor ordered.
- Side effects like feeling sleepy usually get better after a few days, and your team can help with them.
- Other things that might help are:
 - Listening to music, light massage, or imagining a peaceful place (guided imagery)
 - Doing something fun like drawing, writing, solving puzzles, or playing a game
 - Using a warm compress or an ice pack
 - Smelling something pleasant, like lavender

PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION

When you no longer need the medicine, your care team will show you how to safely get rid of it.

What should you tell your care team?

- How bad the pain is. You might use a number scale from 0 (no pain) to 10 (worst pain possible). For kids or people who can't use numbers, your nurse can help with other ways to explain it.
- Where the pain is located
- If the pain stops you from doing things you usually do
- What makes the pain feel better or worse
- If your pain medicine is helping or not
- How often you take the pain medicine
- If you have side effects like constipation, nausea, throwing up, feeling sleepy, dizziness, or itching
- Any questions you have about your medicine
- If pain is keeping you awake at night

Other helpful resources

Hospice Training for Caregivers and Families Video: Pain Managing Pain