



PAIN MANAGEMENT

During Your Hospital Stay





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YOUR COMFORT IS ONE OF OUR TOP PRIORITIES.

While we would like to make you pain free, this is not always possible. Our goal is to make you as comfortable as possible.

This brochure is to help you understand your pain experience, learn what you can do to ease your pain, and how your health care team can help you.

Pain is your body's way of telling you that it is having physical discomfort. Pain is a very personal experience. Only you can tell us how you are feeling and what level of pain you are experiencing. Together we can work to manage your pain at an acceptable level.

UNDERSTANDING PAIN

Many times it is not possible for you to be completely pain free. Certain illnesses or procedures will cause pain. We want to work with you to understand how you are feeling and develop a plan to lessen your pain. Your doctors and nurses will ask you often about your pain level and the location of your pain.

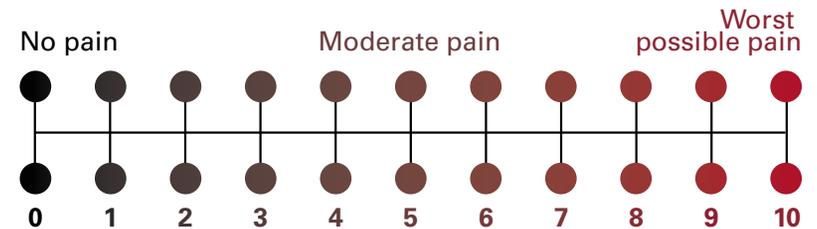
Pain can affect your recovery physically and emotionally. It may cause you to avoid activity that is needed to help heal your body, or affect the amount of time you sleep, or spend with your family and friends. Management of your pain is important to your recovery and to your health care team.

PAIN ASSESSMENT

Your doctors and nurses will ask you to describe your pain. We need to know how much pain you are having, where the pain is located, and what may be causing the pain. You are the best person to tell us about your pain.

You will be asked to rate your pain level using a pain scale. It will help your health care team to know how to treat your pain if we all understand the same pain scales. There are a few different scales that we use to better understand your pain.

The numeric pain rating scale goes from 0 to 10. A score of 0 means you are not having any pain at all. A score of 10 means you are having the worst pain that you can imagine, you may not be able to move or function. We will help you to determine your comfort and ability to function score. It can be hard to use a number to express your pain level.



A FACES scale may help by letting you see a picture that describes how the pain is making you feel. You will be asked to look at the pictures and pick the one that describes your pain best.



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Sometimes you or your family member may not be able to tell us about your pain. We have a pain scale that we can use that will help us determine a pain level based on behavior.

Using these scales will help your doctors and nurses to know if the pain treatment you are receiving is working for you. It will also help us to know when we need to make changes to help make sure you are more comfortable.

Your health care team will ask you what you feel is an acceptable level of pain. We want to know what level will allow you to be able to do the activities needed for your recovery. For example, you may feel that a pain level of 4 is acceptable and will allow you to get up to the bathroom, spend time talking with your family, or work with physical therapy.

DESCRIBING YOUR PAIN

It helps your health care team know how best to help you if we understand the quality and location of your pain. You will be asked to describe your pain. Some words that may help you describe your pain quality include the following:

- Achy
- Tender
- Burning
- Cramping
- Sharp
- Dull
- Stabbing
- Tingling
- Spasm

Note: If you have on-going pain from another medical condition or injury, such as arthritis or a “bad” back, please tell your nurse.

Your nurse will ask you throughout your stay about your pain and then will ask later if the treatment you received has lessened your pain. Even if you think your pain is not that bad, we still need to know in order to provide you the best possible care. Telling us about your pain is not a bother, we want to know.

PAIN TREATMENT

Did you know that there are many ways to improve your pain and that medication is only one of them? In fact, your pain is often better relieved with a combination of treatments. This combination involves medication, activity, and complementary treatment such as ice, heat, relaxation, or music therapy. We need you to be an active participant in your recovery. You are the only one who can tell us about the pain you feel, and your actions can help your recovery.

Activity

If it is appropriate for your medical condition, your doctor will want you to get up out of bed, sit in a chair, or perhaps walk in the hallways. Not moving can make your body stiff and sore. If possible for you, your health care team will want you to keep your body active with moving, coughing, and taking deep breaths. Talk with your nurse about taking pain medication before increased physical activity.

COMFORT MEASURES

We want you to be comfortable. There are some things you can do to help manage your pain. Sometimes it helps lessen your pain if you do things to take the focus off of your pain.

Relaxation

Being in the hospital is stressful. Try closing your eyes and taking slow deep breaths, or meditate to provide you comfort. Ask your nurse if you would like help to learn how to use relaxation techniques to lessen your pain.

Massage

A gentle comforting massage can help relax your body and lessen your pain. A simple back rub by a friend or family member or gentle hand massage can relax your body and distract it from pain. Ask your nurse for massage options during your hospital stay.

Music

Do you have a favorite song or type of music? Music can help your body relax, decrease pain, anxiety, and muscle tension. Listening to music in combination with medication treatment can lessen your pain and make you feel more comfortable.

You or a family member can bring your favorite music and music device player from home. We also have a television channel in your room that plays soothing music. Ask your nurse if you would like assistance with music selection.

Hot and Cold Therapy

Heat can decrease the stiffness in your muscles and help to relax them. Ice can also be used to decrease pain and swelling, and to dull sensitive or painful areas on your body. Ask your nurse if you would like to try hot or cold therapy.

MEDICATIONS

There are a number of different medications that can help lessen your pain in different ways. A combination of medications is often helpful in decreasing your pain. Your doctor may consult with a pharmacist that specializes in treating pain to determine the right medication for you.

Medication History

Have you taken pain medicine before? Do certain medications work better for you? Have you ever felt sick or had a reaction to a specific medicine? We want to know all of this information to help create the best plan to control your pain.

Types of Medications

Pain medicine is often used together with other types of medications to decrease pain. A combination of medications will be ordered by your doctor as appropriate for your type of pain. Medicine to treat your pain can be taken in a variety of ways. Some common routes for pain medicine include: through your intravenous line (IV), in pill form by mouth, or topically through your skin. Your health care team will work with you to determine the medication plan that will help manage your pain at an acceptable level and that is safe for you. Your safety and comfort are our top priority.

Side Effects

It is important to remember that some medications have side effects. Some of the most common side effects include: constipation (trouble having a bowel movement), nausea, or itching. Please let your health care team know if you are concerned you are experiencing a side effect from your pain medicine. Your health care team will work with you to change your medicine or treat your side effects.



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