How can I manage pain at home?

- Use your medication only as directed. If the pain is not lessened or if it gets worse, call your health care provider.
- Remember that medications taken by mouth need time to work. Most oral pain medication needs at least 20 minutes to begin to take effect.
- Take pain medication when your pain first begins. It is harder to ease pain when it becomes severe.
- Take pain medication before any activity that you know will increase your pain.
- Some pain medications cause constipation. Drink plenty of fluids. If you don't have a bowel movement in two days, contact your health care provider.
- Many pain medications can cause drowsiness. Avoid driving or other activities that require you to be alert.
- Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages or ask your health care provider about drinking alcoholic beverages while you are taking pain medication.
- You should discuss other possible side effects with your doctor or pharmacist. (Examples: itching, nausea. . .)
- Non-medication methods (Examples: ice, heat, relaxation) can also help reduce pain when used with pain medication.

What are some non-medication pain management methods?

A part of your routine to manage pain may include the use of non-medication pain relief methods. These methods may help you decrease pain, but usually cannot replace your medication.

- Ice and heat.
- Relaxation, meditation, breathing techniques.
- Social activities and hobbies.
- Physical therapy
- Biofeedback, acupressure/ acupuncture.
- Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS).

Talk with your health care provider on how to use the above methods to help you manage your pain.

MY PAIN CONTROL PLAN

Before Surgery

Medications:
Non-medication Pain Management Methods:
Activities:

After Surgery

Medications:
Non-medication Pain Management Methods:
Activities:

At Home

Medications:
Non-medication Pain Management Methods:
Activities:

My Provider's Information:

My provider's name:
My provider's phone number:

Pain Management Can Help You:

Enjoy comfort while healing

Improve quality of life

Prevent suffering

What Is Pain?

Pain is an unpleasant or uncomfortable feeling caused by:

- **Injury**
- **Surgery**
- **Health Condition**

What can I expect from my health care providers?

- Information about pain and pain relief.
- Commitment to pain prevention and pain management in a timely manner.

What are my options for pain management?

You are the key to getting the best pain relief because pain is personal. You may not be able to get rid of your pain entirely but the pain can be lowered to a level that you can handle and feel better. Both medication and non-medication treatments can be successful in helping to prevent and control pain. Work with your health care provider to choose the method that is best for you so you are as comfortable as possible.

What are the benefits of good pain control?

- Greater comfort
- Improved quality of life
- Increased alertness
- Improved activity

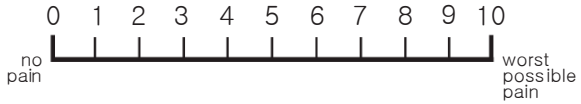
How do I describe my pain to my health care provider?

Your health care providers will help you measure your pain. This measurement will help in determining what pain control methods may be most beneficial for you and how well those methods are working. It will also help your provider know whether or not changes need to be made to your pain treatment plan.

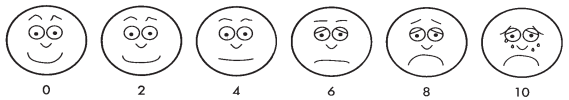
How will my health care provider measure my pain?

To measure your pain, your health care providers will ask you to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10; 0 means no pain and 10 means the worst possible pain. They may also ask you to point to a pain scale or a picture of a face that shows how much pain you are feeling.

0-10 Numeric Pain Intensity Scale



Wong-Baker Faces Pain Rating Scale



From Wong, DL, Hockenberry-Eaton M, Wilson D, Winkelstein ML; Schwartz P: Wong's Essentials of Pediatric Nursing, ed. 6, St. Louis, 2001, Mosby, p. 1301.
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You will also be asked:

- To show or point to where it hurts.
- Which words best describe your pain (Examples: aching, crampy, gnawing, knifelike, shooting...)
- When the pain started.
- How long the pain lasts.
- What makes the pain better or worse.
- If your pain affects your sleep, energy, appetite, activity, relationships or mood.
- What your comfort goal is. You will be asked at what pain level you would like to be treated and at what pain level you would like to be.

What do I need to do to make sure I get the best pain management possible?

If you are being treated for pain, tell your health care provider about:

- Any allergies or reactions you have to medications.
- Pain management methods that have worked well for you in the past, as well as those that have not worked.

If you are being treated for pain, ask your health care provider about:

- Side effects of any prescribed or over the counter medications.

If you are going to have surgery, ask your health care provider what to expect:

- Will there be much pain after surgery?
- How long is the pain likely to last?
- How will my pain be managed after surgery?

Any time you have pain, work with your health care provider to develop a pain control plan that will meet your needs.

How are pain management medications given?

You may receive your pain medication as:

- A pill, a capsule, or a liquid to take by mouth.
- A shot or injection under the skin or into a vein, the spine, a joint, or a large muscle in the arm, leg, or buttocks.
- A patch applied to the skin.
- A suppository into the rectum.
- A Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) machine that allows you to push a button to receive a dose of medicine through a tiny tube into a vein, into the space outside the spinal cord or into the spinal fluid.

How can I manage my pain in the hospital?

- Ask for pain medication when your pain first begins. It is harder to ease pain when it becomes severe.
- Ask for pain medication before you start any activity which you know will worsen your pain.
- Tell your health care provider about any pain that will not go away.

IN SUMMARY:
Get involved with your health care provider in developing a pain control plan that works for you.