

Tips for Managing Pain

If you are experiencing pain it is important to share this with your health care team such as your nurse, doctor, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, personal support worker, social worker, etc. Your health care team will work with you to help better manage your pain.

Your health care team will ask you several questions so they can better understand your pain. This will allow them to work together with you and your doctor to find ways to improve your pain.

Some of the questions they will ask are:

- On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being no pain and 10 being the worst possible pain, what is your pain score/rating?
This will allow them to determine the intensity of your pain. If you find it difficult to rate your pain on a scale from 0-10, let your team know and they will work with you to find another way to report your pain.
- Where is your pain at? Does it radiate/spread anywhere?
- Is your pain constant or does it come and go?
- What does your pain feel like? Some of the words to describe your pain may be burning, stabbing, aching, throbbing, numbing... Use your own words to describe your pain.
- When did your pain begin? What makes it worse? What makes it better?
- What medications are you taking currently to help with your pain? Are they working?
- What is your pain rating approximately an hour after you take your medications?
- What medications have you tried in the past?
- Have you had any side effects from medications?
- Why do you think you are having the pain?
- What would you like your pain rating to be so you feel like your pain is better managed?
- How is your pain affecting your life, such as sleeping, eating, daily activities, relationships, mood...?

Allowing your health care team to have a clear understanding of your pain will help them work with you to find the best way to treat your pain.



If you are prescribed pain medications it is important to remember a few things:

- Always report any side effects you are experiencing. Some of the side effects usually improve after a few days such as nausea and drowsiness. It is important to work with your health care team to try and manage these side effects.
- Pain medications cause constipation, you will need to take something to prevent this either with medications or through diet.

Increasing fiber, water and exercise, such as walking, can help with managing constipation.

You should have a bowel movement at least every 3 days, your health care team will ask you when you had your last bowel movement as well as the type of bowel movement you had, such as small, large, soft, hard etc. Some people find it helpful to write down when they had a bowel movement. You can use a calendar or write it in your pain diary or medication record.

- It is important to ensure you take your medications regularly, as ordered. Depending on your pain and the plan to manage your pain, you may be ordered a regular dose and a breakthrough/prn dose. Your health care team will help you to understand how to take your medications. If you have any questions, be sure to ask, they are there to help.
- It is important to record when you have taken your pain medications, what dose you took and if it worked. This is where a pain diary is helpful. A sample pain diary has been attached for your use.

Share your pain diary with your health care team, this will help them to assess if the plan to manage your pain is working.

- Always store your medications in a safe place away from children. Do not share your medications with others. Return any old prescriptions or unused medications to the pharmacy for safe disposal.

If you have any questions or concerns please discuss them with your health care team. The more information you provide to your health care team the better they will be able to support you.



