

Tips for Pain Management

adapted from Kaiser Permanente Home Health and Wells, N et al. Improving the Quality of Care Through Pain Assessment and Management (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2658/>)

Pain has physically harmful effects. It can make other symptoms worse and impede healing. Unrelieved pain can result in chronic pain at a later date. It is important to “keep ahead” of the pain. National standards of care require that pain be promptly addressed and managed.

- It is your responsibility to report your pain to medical staff and work to understand the options for its management.
- Ask for relief when pain first begins or returns.
- Establish a realistic goal for pain management with your nurse or therapist.
- Tell your nurse or therapist if you encounter any of the following barriers to managing pain:
 - Not understanding the pain
 - Thinking pain cannot be relieved or that it is a normal part of your condition and should be present
 - Thinking you are not a good patient if you have pain
 - Thinking that medicine causes addiction
 - Having difficulty affording pain medications or getting refills
 - Having difficulty managing the side effects of pain medications
 - Having difficulty telling others about your pain for whatever reason
- Some ways to relieve pain in addition to medications are:
 - Relaxation (deep breathing exercises, abdominal breathing with or without calming music)
 - Distraction (watching non-stressful or comedy TV, listening to peaceful music)
 - Physician-ordered treatments if appropriate (TENS, massage, heat, cold)



This guide is not intended to replace medical or other professional advice, and any use of this information is at the reader's discretion.

- The side effects of pain medications can be addressed.

Nausea/Vomiting

Check that medications are being taken appropriately (with or without food)
Adjust or change medications

Constipation

Increase fluid and/or fiber intake
Abdominal massage - rub from right to left across the upper abdomen and down the left side for 2-4 minutes
Only as ordered by a physician, taking a mild laxative, suppository or enema

Sedation

Drink coffee or other caffeinated beverages IF this will not aggravate any other ailment you may have
Having your doctor adjust the dose for daytime use, or having the doctor order two different medicines - one for mild pain and one for severe pain

Diarrhea

Having your doctor adjust or change medications
Decrease fiber intake
Continue to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration



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