

Pain Basics

Acute Pain begins suddenly and is often sharp in nature. Examples include surgery, broken bones, burns, and childbirth.

Chronic Pain persists despite the fact the injury has healed. Examples include headache, low back pain, cancer pain and arthritis.

Talking about Pain:

To control pain, tell your doctor as much as you can about your pain.

- **Location:** Where does it hurt?
- **Intensity:** How strong does the pain feel?
- **Duration:** How long do you feel the pain? How often does it occur?
- **Causes:** What makes the pain worse?
- **Relief:** What helps the pain? What types of remedies do you use for the pain? How much relief do you get from pain relief remedies you use?
- **Description:** Is it burning? Dull? Sharp? Stabbing? Spasms? Aching?

Pain Rating Scales:

Your doctor or nurse may ask you to “rate” your pain on a scale of zero to ten. “Zero” means no pain, “Five” means moderate pain and “Ten” means worst possible pain.

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The James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute
The Ohio State University Medical Center

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Controlling Pain

Your doctor may suggest medication management and/or other treatments for your pain. If your doctor orders **medication** to relieve your pain, ask the following questions

- How and when should I take the medicine, and for how long?
- What are the side effects from the medication?
- What should I do if side effects occur?
- Remember as we age the way our body uses and eliminates medication changes.

Other pain management treatments your doctor may suggest could include

- **Relaxation** to decrease tension associated with pain, such as music or the comforting sounds of nature.
- **Physical Therapy** for exercise or application of heat or cold.

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