



Eliminating Barriers to Pain and Fatigue Management Key Teaching Points

Pain Assessment

- 1. Is there a benefit to having pain or suffering with pain?**
 - Continuing to be in pain affects all aspects of your life (appetite, function, emotions, mood, sleep and other areas).
 - It is best to stop pain before it becomes severe and harder to control.
- 2. Do patients have a right to expect adequate pain treatment?**
 - Yes, patients deserve the best pain relief possible.
- 3. Is it important to describe your pain so your physician can better understand and treat it?**
 - Your health care providers will want you to describe your pain in order to treat it effectively – is it Sharp? Shooting? Dull? Constant? Burning? Aching? Describing your pain will help in selecting the best medications and treatments for your specific pain.
- 4. Is it helpful to use a scale to measure your pain and communicate it to others?**
 - Just as we use a thermometer to check your temperature and know your exact temperature, we use pain scales, such as a rating of 0 = no pain to 10 = worst pain, to best capture your pain experience.
- 5. Can doctors and nurses tell how much pain you have?**
 - Pain is a very individual experience so it is important for you to help doctors and nurses know if you are in pain. Please be sure to describe your pain and rate it on the 0 = no pain to 10 = worst pain scale.
- 6. How much pain relief can be expected?**
 - While not everyone will have a pain score of “0” all the time, it is important to seek the most relief of pain and side effects possible. Relieving your pain or side effects may not happen immediately. Sometimes several adjustments are needed to help you achieve the best relief possible.
- 7. Do you have any special questions about pain or pain assessment?**



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Pain Management

- 1. Can pain usually be well controlled with medications taken by mouth?**
 - Yes, the vast majority of patients have pain relieved through taking medicines by mouth.
- 2. If these medications do not work, are many other options available?**
 - There are many kinds of medications available and many ways of giving these medications. If oral medications are not effective, there are other routes available.
- 3. When morphine and morphine-like medications are used to relieve pain, is addiction a problem?**
 - The same pain medications used in cancer care, such as morphine or oxycodone are rarely, but sometimes abused. Addiction occurs rarely in people who are taking medications for pain.
- 4. If you take strong pain medications now, will they still work later?**
 - Yes, pain medications can be taken over months and years and doses can be adjusted as needed.
- 5. Do patients often take less medication than is prescribed?**
 - Patients often take less pain medications in order to reduce the side effects.
 - The best approach is to balance the best pain relief with the fewest side effects possible.
 - Patients may also take less medication than is prescribed for other reasons, such as lack of money to pay for them or other issues.
- 6. What kinds of medications are used for pain?**
 - Treatment of pain may include a combination of non-opioids (such as Motrin or Tylenol), opioids (such as morphine, oxycodone, hydrocodone) and other medications.
- 7. Do pain medications cause side effects?**
 - The most common side effects of pain medication are constipation and sedation.
 - Side effects of medicines for pain must be aggressively treated. Tell your doctor or nurse before side effects become severe.
- 8. Are treatments other than medications also helpful for pain?**
 - Many things can help your pain beyond just taking medications. Heat, cold or exercise may help or relaxation, imagery and distraction may be of use.
- 9. Do you have any special questions about pain management?**
- 10. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are having any difficulty getting your medications or concerns about taking them. They have dealt with these issues before and will help you.**