

PAIN MANAGEMENT

Pain and Pain Relief Measures :

The International Association for the Study of Pain defines pain as an "unpleasant experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage to a person's body." There are two basic forms of physical pain: acute and chronic.

Acute Pain

Acute pain, for the most part, results from disease, inflammation, or injury to tissues. It is immediate and usually of a short duration. Acute pain is a normal response to injury and may be accompanied by anxiety or emotional distress. The cause of acute pain can usually be diagnosed and treated.

Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is continuous pain that persists for more than 3 months, and beyond the time of normal healing. It ranges from mild to severe and can last weeks, months, years or even a lifetime. The cause of chronic pain is not always evident, although it can be brought on by chronic conditions such as arthritis, fibromyalgia and dystonia. Chronic pain can often interfere with your quality of life, sleep, and productivity.

A Symptom of Many Diseases

Pain often accompanies diseases of the bones, muscles, joints and skin which affect millions of Americans. Most of these diseases are chronic and may cause lifelong pain. In certain cases, such as with some rheumatic diseases, the sources of pain may include inflammation of the synovial membrane (tissue that lines the joints), the tendons, or the ligaments, as well as muscle strain and muscle fatigue. A combination of these factors contributes to the intensity of the pain. Muscle inflammation characterizes other painful disorders such as polymyositis (characterized by inflamed and tender muscles throughout the body, particularly those of the shoulder and hip) and dermatomyositis (characterized by patchy red rashes around the knuckles, eyes, and other parts of the body, along with chronic inflammation of the muscles). In other cases, such as with myofascial pain syndromes, the cause of the pain is unknown. Myofascial pain syndromes affect sensitive areas known as trigger points, located within the body's muscles. It is important to consult with a physician to help determine the cause and treatment for your pain.

There is no medical test that can convey the level of pain you are feeling. Only you can describe your pain. In order to provide an accurate description of your pain, it may be helpful to share the answers to the **following questions** with your doctor:

How long have you had pain?

Where is the pain located?

Does the pain come and go or is it continuous?

What makes the pain better or worse?

Has the pain changed since your last visit with your doctor?

What medications or treatments have you tried for the pain?

Among the **treatments and interventions** that can reduce pain are:

- medications
- various types of anesthetic blocks
- complementary or alternative treatments
- social and spiritual support

Other **Complementary Or Alternative Therapies** for Pain:

- heat packs

- cold packs
- prayer
- hypnosis
- positioning/body splinting
- positive thinking
- music
- laughter
- acupuncture
- TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (Note : A prescription usually is necessary for insurance reimbursement of a TENS unit.)
- Biofeedback (www.aapb.org)

A convenient way to organize **questions and answers about pain** is to think of the letters of the alphabet from "P" to "T".

P what provokes my pain? What palliates or relieves my pain?

Q what qualities does my pain have? For example, burning, aching, electric shock-like, sharp or dull, etc.

R what region of my body is involved with pain?

S what is the severity of my pain? Mild, moderate or severe?

T what time of day is my pain worse or is it independent of time and more activity related?

Online Resources:

American Pain Foundation (<http://www.painfoundation.org>)

About Pain (<http://www.pain.com>)

More information about Chronic Pain (<http://www.theacpa.org>)

Using Pain Scales

Healthcare providers today use a variety of tests to rate and compare pain. Although these are imprecise tools, they are the best way health-care providers have to understand what you're feeling. The better your health-care provider understands what you're experiencing, the better he or she can help manage your pain.

Using a pain scale. Among the most common scales health-care providers and patients use to describe pain are the 0 to 10 scale and the visual analog scale.

With a 0 to 10 scale, you rank how your pain feels from 0 (no pain at all) to 10 (the worst pain imaginable).

With a visual analog scale, you mark where your pain falls on a line that runs from 0 (no pain) to 100 (the worst pain).

Pain specialists may also use more sophisticated methods, such as the McGill Pain Questionnaire, to get a clearer picture of the pain you're experiencing. These tests take longer to answer, and some have to be given by another person. Because of their complexity, these tests are not as easy to do as the 0 to 10 or visual scale ways of rating pain.

Keeping a Pain Diary. You can also use these scales to rate your pain yourself and record your experience from day to day, week to week and month to month. This record keeping is called a pain diary. _ (<http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ih/IH/WSIHW000/29816/31047/345484.html?d=dmContent>)

A pain diary can be useful in gauging how well treatments are working and whether lifestyle changes or other pain management strategies are helping. Keeping a pain diary is important because it will help you remember details about your pain that you may want to discuss with your doctor and/or healthcare team and it may demonstrate patterns in your pain that are not obvious day to day.

Sample Pain Scales in Use Today :

Numerical Scale

0 (No pain.)

1

2

3

4

- 5 (moderate pain)
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Worst imaginable pain.)

Visual Analog Scale

No pain _____ Worst pain

Directions: Ask the patient to indicate on the line where the pain is in relation to the two extremes. Qualification is only approximate; for example, a midpoint mark would indicate that the pain is approximately half of the worst possible pain.

Categorical Scale

- None (0)
- Mild (1-3)
- Moderate (4-6)
- Severe (7-10)

Pain Faces Scale

- 0
- Very happy, no hurt
- 2
- Hurts just a little bit
- 4
- Hurts a little more
- 6
- Hurts even more
- 8
- Hurts a whole lot
- 10
- Hurts as much as you can imagine

Adapted with permission from Whaley L, Wong, D. Nursing Care of Infants and Children, ed 3, p. 1070. ©1987 by C.V. Mosby Company. Research reported in Wong D, Baker C. Pain in children: Comparison of assessment scales. Pediatric Nursing 14(1):9-17, 1988.

To locate a **Pain Management Specialist**, visit the <http://www.nationalpainfoundation.org> website today or our [Find a Doctor](#) page.

Additional Pain Resources : New !

- [Http://community.wegohealth.com/group/dystonia](http://community.wegohealth.com/group/dystonia)
- [Emerging Solutions in Pain](#)
- [Gray's Anatomy](#)
- [Harvard Medical School Family Health Guide](#)
- [Lane Medical Library, Stanford University Medical Center](#)
- [MedWeb at Emory University](#)
- [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke: Chronic Pain Information Page](#)
- [National Pain Education Council \(NPEC\)](#)
- [National Pain Foundation](#)
- [Official Journal of the American Pain Society](#)
- [Principles In Pain Management and Treatment Strategies For Management of Chronic Malignant Pain and Non-Malignant Pain \(online lecture\)](#)
- [Stop Pain: Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care, Beth Israel Medical Center](#)
- [TMJ Association \(TMJA\)](#)

Avoiding Addiction to Pain Meds :

www.drugabuse.gov/Infobox/PainMed.html

<http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/drug-tolerance-addiction>

<http://www.addiction-free.com/>

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