

# Managing Your Pain

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*When you are in pain, it can be difficult to focus on anything else; pain can affect every part of your life.*

*You may not be able to sleep or eat well.*

*Even talking with loved ones may be tiring.*

*Physical pain can take away peace of mind, comfort, enjoyment and most of all hope.*

*When you are in pain you may feel angry, sad or hopeless.*

*You deserve to have your pain controlled.*

*Learning the truth about pain and what you can do to manage your pain can help you focus on other parts of your life and enjoy your days.*



## The Truth About Pain

- ⊕ Your pain is not something you should just accept as “a normal part” of growing older or part of living with a serious illness.
- ⊕ Your pain may make it difficult for you to work, sleep and participate in activities.
- ⊕ Your pain is not the same as other peoples; only you can describe it and how it is affecting you.
- ⊕ Your pain is real and something can always be done to manage it.

Even with these truths, people in pain often struggle with being able to have their pain well managed.

- Many cultures place value on being “strong” so people sometimes feel that seeking pain relief could be seen as a sign of weakness.
- Some may see pain and suffering as part of being seriously ill and something people must learn to live with.
- Fears about the use of pain medications and their side effects can make people worry about taking them.

## What You Can Do to Manage Pain

- ❁ Tell someone about your pain; do not suffer in silence. Talk about how you feel and share your thoughts, concerns and choices with your family and friends. Find support from others in similar situations. Ask for help.
- ❁ Use a 'pain diary.' A 'pain diary' is a way for you to track information about your pain to help you tell your doctor when you are in pain and how it felt. Since the way you feel may change day-to-day or when you do certain activities, it is important to write it down several times a day.
- ❁ Find a doctor or other healthcare professional that is trained in pain management to work with you to check, treat and manage your pain symptoms.
- ❁ Learn about all pain treatment options that are available to you. In addition to medications, complementary therapies such as massage or meditation may be helpful.
- ❁ Use resources from the library, support groups and pain organizations to help you gain a better understanding of pain management.
- ❁ Your local hospice and palliative care providers have been specially trained in how to treat complex pain. For more information about where to find a hospice or palliative care provider, go to [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org).

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# Talking with Your Doctor

*If you are in pain, tell your doctor and caregivers. Before you talk to your doctor, write down the answers to the questions listed below so you are prepared to describe your pain.*

How long has the pain been a problem? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is it located? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this a new pain or have you had it before?  new  had before

Do you have pain in more than one area?  yes  no

If so, which pain bothers you the most? \_\_\_\_\_

How severe is your pain?  mild  moderate  severe  unbearable

Describe the pain:  sharp/stabbing  dull  throbbing  aching  burning

In the pain area, is there any:  numbness  tingling  new  weakness

How does the pain interfere with your daily normal activities? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What activities or conditions make the pain worse? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does it hurt more at certain times? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What have you tried to ease the pain? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What medicines are you currently taking to manage your pain? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When are you taking the medicines?  at set times  as needed

How well are these medications working?  some  not at all  very well

Are you allergic or sensitive to any pain medicine? \_\_\_\_\_

*After you give your doctor information about your pain, ask about all the different pain treatment options that are available for your situation. Discuss the benefits and side effects of each and any concerns that you may have.*

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For more information, Contact CaringInfo:

**InfoLine 800.658.8898 • Multilingual Line 877.658.8896**  
**[www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org) • [caringinfo@nhpco.org](mailto:caringinfo@nhpco.org)**