

Managing Your Pain at Home

Green Zone: All clear

- Your comfort goal of _____ is met.
- Pain doesn't interfere with activity, movement or ability to enjoy life.
- If you're taking medication for pain, you are moving your bowels comfortably at least every other day.
- You do not have new pain.

Green Zone Means:

- Your pain is under control at a level that is acceptable to you.
- Continue taking your medications as directed.
- Continue using _____ along with your medicines.

Yellow Zone: Caution

If you have any of the following symptoms:

- Pain that is moderate or severe or greater than 4 on a scale of 0-10 in spite of treatment.
- New pain begins.
- It has been 1-2 days since you've had a comfortable bowel movement.
- Pain interferes with activity.
- You're too sleepy or hard to wake up, or can't keep the pills down.

Yellow Zone Means:

- Your symptoms may indicate that your pain management plan needs adjusting.

Call your home health nurse:
See contact information below

Red Zone

- You haven't had a bowel movement for three or more days.
- You experience new severe pain.
- You have unacceptable pain relief.
- A family member can't wake you up, you are throwing up, and/or you are confused.

Red Zone Means:

- You need to be evaluated right away.

Call your home health nurse right away:
See contact information below

Home Health Agency: _____

Home Health Nurse: _____

Contact Number: _____

Nurse/Therapist Guide to Patient Self Management Tool

Managing Your Pain at Home (Zones)

As with all zone tools, use this tool only if your agency has a system in place for a nurse or therapist to respond to patient calls at all times during the day and night.

This is NOT an assessment tool. It is a tool to assist patients and caregivers to figure out who and when to call for assistance in dealing with the patient's pain. The nurse or therapist should complete a comprehensive pain assessment at SOC/ROC and anytime pain is reported.

Additionally, this tool does not replace the need for comprehensive pain education to the patient and/or caregiver. Use supplementary approaches to teach how and why to report pain, the common misconceptions about pain management, how to implement pain management techniques, and how to anticipate and manage side effects.

Explaining how to use the zone tool follows the assessment and teaching. A copy of the tool should be left in the patient's home for them to refer to when dealing with their pain.

In the green zone, there is a space to enter the patient's pain (comfort) goal. There is also a place to add any non-pharmacological methods the patient may be using to help manage their pain, e.g. heat, cold, distraction, etc.

At the bottom of the form there is a box to enter your agency name, the nurse's/therapist's name and the phone number.

"Managing Your Pain at Home" has been developed by the author based on clinical experience and best practices in a variety of published Guidelines and Standards, including: American Pain Society. Guideline for the Management of Cancer Pain in Adults and Children. Glenview IL, APS, 2005
AGS Panel on Persistent Pain in Older Persons. The Management of persistent pain in older persons. J American Geriatrics Society 50(1): 2002.
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