



# PAIN: THE FIFTH VITAL SIGN™ \*

*Vital signs are taken seriously. If pain were assessed with the same zeal as other vital signs are, it would have a much better chance of being treated properly. We need to train doctors and nurses to treat pain as a vital sign. Quality care means that pain is measured and treated.*

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## FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE PAIN ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT



Consider "Pain" the 5th Vital Sign

- ✓ Assess pain along with pulse, blood pressure, temperature, and respiration.



Residents are the experts on their pain. Encourage residents to share their thoughts and feelings regarding pain. They know what it is, what it feels like, and how it affects their life.

- ✓ Assess pain using the **WILDA** approach: **W**ords to Describe, **I**ntensity, **L**ocation, **D**uration, **A**ggravating/Alleviating Factors



Residents have the right to have their pain evaluated.



Implement clinical practice guidelines from either the American Geriatrics Society, the American Medical Directors Association, or the American Pain Society.



Explain the importance of pain evaluation and treatment to other health care professionals, residents, and family members.



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