

Get smart about pain

You need to know the basic facts about pain:

- ◆ You are the key to getting the best pain relief, because pain is different for each person.
- ◆ Communicate your discomfort to your doctor and nurse.
- ◆ It is much easier to treat pain early before it becomes severe. Therefore, scheduling your pain medication may be the key.
- ◆ Take your medication when the pain is beginning.
- ◆ If your pain control is not working, call your doctor and let him or her know:
 - 1) when the pain starts, and whether it comes and goes;
 - 2) what makes it better or worse;
 - 3) when you took your last dose of medication.

Types of pain

Pain can be any discomfort you have, anywhere in your body. Pain may be described as:

- Aching
- Burning
- Tightness
- Cramping
- Sharp
- Hurting
- Pulling
- Stabbing
- Dull

Pain is very individual. Your pain and its treatment may be different from other people's. Pain control methods may also be different. What works to relieve one person's pain may not work to relieve another's pain. The more you can tell us about your pain, the easier it will be for us to help you.

Please tell your doctor or nurse if you feel any side effects from the pain medication, including:

- Nausea
- Constipation
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Itching
- Restlessness

These side effects can be treated.

Other pain treatments

There are different ways to help relieve pain and reduce the need for large amounts of pain medications. These include:

- ◆ Relaxation, imagery, and deep breathing
- ◆ Position change or elevation
- ◆ Cold packs or warm compresses
- ◆ Music or other distraction
- ◆ "Splinting" or holding pressure over a surgical site when moving or coughing
- ◆ Laughter and humor
- ◆ Foot or hand massage or back rub

Continue your pain control if it is working!