

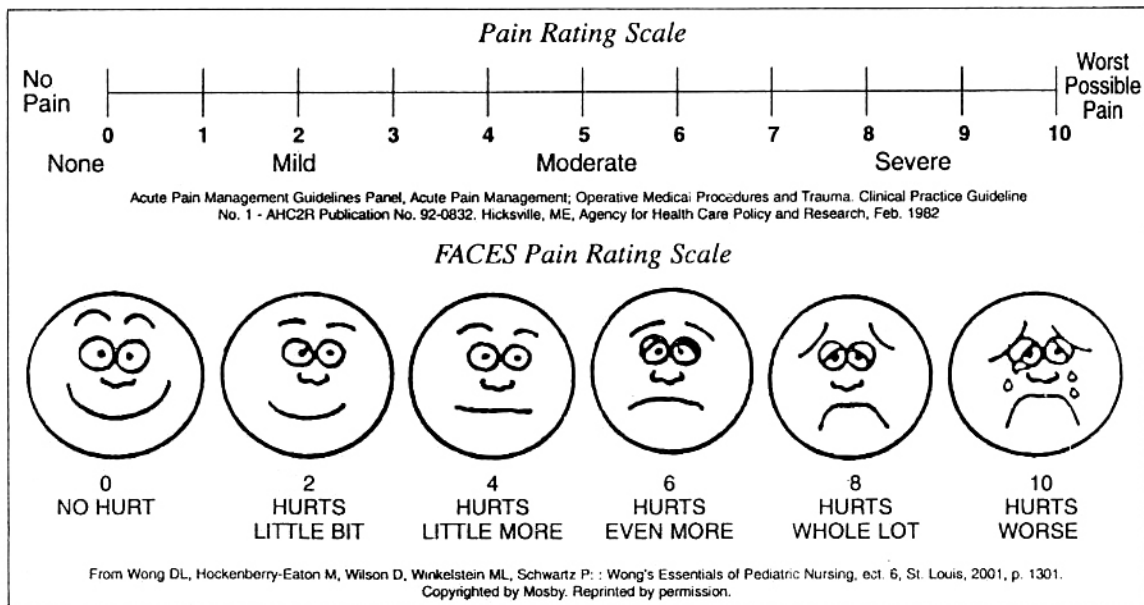
CONTINUUM HEALTH PARTNERS

PATIENT INFORMATION ON PAIN MANAGEMENT

We are committed to recognizing and treating your pain using medicines and treatments that will provide the best level of relief. As the patient, you have valuable information regarding your pain to give to the staff. Remember that you know your pain best.

Always tell your doctor, nurse *or* other staff member when you are having pain. Don't be afraid to ask for pain medicine. Many people are so worried about "getting hooked" *or* addicted that they don't talk about their pain or take the medicines that are prescribed. In most cases, addiction is not a concern and medicines can, and should, be taken to relieve pain. If you have concerns about addiction, you should speak openly about them to your doctors and nurses. Managing pain is an important aspect of getting well.

The nurses and doctors will ask questions about the intensity (how strong), location and the type (throbbing, burning, aching) of pain you may be experiencing. We often ask you to rate the intensity of pain, using a **pain scale**. The pain scale is used in evaluating the pain and also in evaluating the effectiveness of pain medications or treatments. The **pain scale** uses numbers from 0 (no pain) to 10 (the worst pain possible) or pictures of faces that show various levels of pain intensity.



It is helpful for you to know that pain control is important in providing you with the comfort and strength to heal and get well. We know that patients who have their pain well controlled generally tend to recover better and faster.

We can provide a variety of options in the prevention and management of pain. Some of these options are:

- pain medication by mouth (pills) or skin patch
- pain medicine given by injection into a muscle
- pain medicine given into a vein

PATIENT INFORMATION ON PAIN MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

- pain medicine given through a PCA (Patient Controlled Analgesia) pump: This is a machine that contains pain medicine. It has a button that you can push to give yourself a dose of pain medicine when you need it (within the limits ordered by your doctor).
- Regional Anesthesia and Spinal Medications: local anesthetics and/or pain medicine is injected into the spine or other areas to relieve pain or numb a part of the body for a period of time
- There are also methods that can assist in the relief of pain that don't involve medicines at all, such as: relaxation techniques, hot or cold packs, rest, deep breathing exercises, proper positioning in the bed or chair and the positive effects of using distraction techniques such as music, television and visitors.

No matter which pain management therapy you use, remember some important facts:

- Discuss pain management therapy with your health care providers. Let them know your allergies, previous experience with pain medicines, other medications that you are taking and your health history.
- Tell the staff how strong or severe your pain is. Let them know what makes it better and what makes it worse.
- Ask for pain medication when you need it or before doing an activity that may cause pain—**don't wait until the pain is too strong or out of control**
- Give the pain medication time to work. Ask the staff when you can expect to feel some relief from the pain.
- Use rest, deep breathing and other non-drug treatments to *help* your pain.
- Tell the staff how you are feeling. Let them know if or how effective the pain management therapy is. Tell them if you are experiencing any unexpected or unacceptable effects from your pain management therapy.

Your health care provider knows how to assess and treat your pain. If you have any questions or need further information, speak with your nurse or doctor.