

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PAIN.

Everyone has the right to have their pain assessed and treated. Your doctor, nurse, pharmacist and therapist will work with you to assure your pain is prevented or relieved. At Meeker Memorial Hospital (MMH) we believe that managing your pain is an important part of your care.

MOST PAIN CAN BE CONTROLLED.

UNRELIEVED PAIN CAN LEAD TO:

- ♦ Sleep problems
- ♦ Delays in healing
- ♦ Loss of physical movement
- ♦ Depression

WHEN PAIN IS CONTROLLED YOU WILL:

- ♦ Sleep better
- ♦ Have improved healing
- ♦ Be more active
- ♦ Have a positive outlook on life
- ♦ Eat better

Good pain management can improve your quality of life.

WHAT IS CAUSING THE PAIN?

Most pain is caused by damage to nerves or tissue. Damage to body tissue such as bone and organs can feel dull and achy or sharp and stabbing. Damage to nerve tissue, can feel hot, burning, tingly, shooting or stabbing. Spiritual, emotional and social worries or fears can increase physical pain. Sometimes there is not a clear reason for your pain.

No matter what the cause ... pain is a serious concern for patients and health-care providers.

COMMUNICATION IS VERY IMPORTANT.

In order to better understand the pain you are experiencing, your doctor, nurse or therapist need to know:

- ♦ Where is the pain?
- ♦ Does it spread anywhere?
- ♦ Is the pain constant or does it come and go?
- ♦ Does it feel achy, sharp, dull, stabbing, burning, or shooting?
- ♦ What makes the pain better or worse?
- ♦ Does the pain interfere with things you want or need to do?

When you feel pain, it is often difficult to describe to your caregivers. Using a pain rating scale can help you communicate exactly what you are feeling. The Numeric Pain Rating Scale is a helpful tool you can use to describe how much pain you are feeling and to measure how well the treatments are working to relieve your pain.

UNDERSTAND THE PAIN RATING SCALE.

On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 means “no pain” and 10 means “pain as bad as it could be”.

0-10 NUMERIC PAIN RATING SCALE

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No Pain			Moderate				Worst Pain			

Rate your pain before and after you take medication and/or receive treatment. This will help your caregiver know if the medication or the treatment is working.



SET GOALS FOR YOUR COMFORT AND RECOVERY.

A comfort goal is a pain rating that is acceptable to you. Your comfort goal should be a pain rating that makes it easy for you to sleep, eat, or do other physical activity needed for your recovery.

For example:

- ♦ If you had surgery, you will need to cough, take deep breaths, get up in the chair and maybe take short walks to prevent pneumonia and other complications.

What pain rating will allow you to do this?

- ♦ If you have persistent, ongoing pain, what activities do you want to do that pain keeps you from doing?

What pain rating will allow you to do this?

If you are not sure, you can set a goal and change it later to better meet your needs.

KEEP YOUR PAIN UNDER CONTROL.

Many people need a pain rating of 3 or less to be able to function without problems. Studies show that ratings of 4 or higher make it difficult for patients to carry out daily activities.

Maintain a pain rating equal to or less than your goal as much of the time as possible.

Talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or therapist honestly about your pain so that you can receive the proper treatment.

Pain is whatever the person with pain says it is.

HOW IS PAIN TREATED?

Medication can help control pain. The best time to manage pain is when it first begins. If you know your pain may worsen with an activity, take pain medication first to prevent the pain. If pain does occur, don't wait for it to get worse before asking for pain medication. Pain medication often works better on a regular schedule rather than taking it "as needed" in response to pain. What your doctor and nurse recommend will depend on your type of pain.

You can take medication in different ways, such as pills, patches, suppositories, infusion into a vein (IV) or injection into the muscle (IM). Sometimes a person may benefit from a small tube (catheter) in the back, giving the medication into the spinal space. This is called epidural or intrathecal.

Most pain is best treated with a combination of medication and non-medication approaches. Non-medication may include cold packs and/or heating pads, massage, relaxation exercises, breathing techniques, repositioning, or distraction (music or TV).

AVOID POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS.

Drinking plenty of fluids, eating more fiber, using stool softeners, and walking will help to avoid some of the side effects that occur when taking pain medication.

2005 Reference: McCafferty, M., Pasero, C. Pain: Clinical Manual. 2nd ed., 1999: Mosby, Inc.

YOUR GUIDE TO PAIN MANAGEMENT

As your caregivers at Meeker Memorial Hospital, we believe that managing pain is an important part of your care.

If you have any questions or concerns about the pain you are experiencing or about the medication or treatments you are receiving, please feel free to contact your nurse or doctor.



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