

## SIDE EFFECTS

Most medications cause some unwanted reactions that affect how you react to the medication.

Some common side effects and how to manage them are:

- **Constipation** – walking, stool softeners or laxatives can help
- **Nausea** – this should go away with time, but we often can give you another medication to help prevent your feeling sick to your stomach
- **Sedation** – (sleepiness) you need to be careful and not drive or operate heavy machinery if this is a problem
- **Stomach discomfort** – usually goes away once the medicine is stopped
- **Confusion and/or disorientation** – very common in the elderly, often goes away when the medication is stopped
- **Itching or skin irritation** – please let your nurse know if you develop a rash
- **Dry mouth** – ask if you can have hard candy or ice chips, this will go away when the medication is stopped
- **Unsteady/dizzy** – your coordination may be off, and you may have increased risk for a fall. If you feel this way, please call for help before you get up.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: How do I let someone know if I am having pain?**

**A:** *Use your call light, or tell any of the staff. They will make sure your nurse knows. We will work hard to keep you comfortable.*

**Q: When should I tell my nurse if the pain medication isn't working?**

**A:** *Depending on the medication you are taking, it may take minutes to an hour for the effect to start. Your nurse will be in to check and see if the medicine is working. If you have been taking pain medications for a while, you may require stronger doses because your sensitivity to them has decreased.*

**Q: Can I get addicted to pain medicine?**

**A:** *Addiction is about craving the drug for its mental effects. When the medicines are taken properly for pain control, the chances for addiction are unlikely.*

If you have any questions about your pain medications, please ask your doctor, nurse or therapist.

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## Guide to Managing Your Pain



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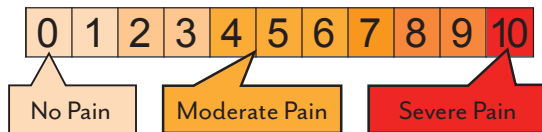
One of INTEGRIS Canadian Valley Hospital's top priorities is to manage your pain. Everyone behaves differently when in pain. You are the only one who can help us manage your pain effectively. We are committed to doing everything in our power to help keep you comfortable.

## DESCRIBING YOUR PAIN

Our staff will ask you about "pain" on a regular basis. You may be asked to "rate" your pain using one of several scales.

### The NUMBER Scale

You will be asked to rate your pain on a scale of 0-10 with zero meaning no pain, and 10 meaning the worst pain imaginable.



### The FACES Scale

You are asked to choose the facial expression that best shows how you feel.



We may ask you to describe your pain in words like "aching, throbbing or stabbing" and "mild, moderate or severe."

We will also ask at what level your pain is "acceptable" using this scale. We understand that you may get tired of us asking, "How is your pain?" over and over again, but it will help us to care for you better.

## CONTROLLING YOUR PAIN

**With many conditions it is impossible to be completely pain free, but it is the goal of our staff to control your pain to a level that is acceptable to you.** It is important that you tell us when you are having pain, or if the pain changes in level or type.

There are several ways to control your pain. The most common way is with medications:

- Narcotics (used for severe pain—for short periods of time, or in some cases may be needed longer for chronic pain)
- Non-narcotic pain medications like Aspirin, Tylenol and Ibuprofen
- Muscle relaxants

There are other things you can do to help reduce your pain like:

- Heat and cold therapy
- Exercise and repositioning
- Relaxation and music or aromatherapy

Often a combination of the above methods works better than any one method used alone. **Our staff will do everything they can to help control your pain.**

## MEDICATION SCHEDULES

There are 2 ways for medications to be ordered. **"Scheduled"** means that your doctor ordered for your medicine to be given on a regular schedule. **As Needed or "PRN"** means that you may have your medication at certain times only if you need it. You must ask for "PRN" medications.

It is important that you ask for your pain medication when your pain first begins rather than waiting for it to get out of control, and therefore more difficult to treat.



## FORMS OF PAIN MEDICATION

There are many ways to take pain medication. Common ways or "routes" are:

- **Pills** – by mouth (takes effect in up to an hour)
- **IV** – through your vein (takes effect within minutes)
- **IM** – through a shot in your muscle
- **PCA** – (p a t i e n t controlled analgesia) where you control how much medication you get by pushing a button\*
- **Epidural** – medication given through a small tube inserted in your spinal canal\*
- **Pain Buster** – used after some surgeries to control pain
- **Nerve Blocks** – used after some surgeries to control pain
- **Skin Patches** – medication is absorbed through the skin
- **Suppository** – medication is placed in the rectum

*\*PCA and Epidural medications are given through a pump that is programmed to limit how much you can get in a specific time frame.*

### PLEASE NOTE

If your medicine is used to treat acute pain, you should be able to cut back on the amount, and eventually not need it any longer.