

NTWC Pain Brochure

1. Understanding Pain

Everyone may experience pain at some point in life. It is important to understand that most pain conditions can be controlled, and unrelieved pain can lead to problems such as functional disturbance, sleep problems, and depression.

Acute pain:

Usually lasts for relatively a short period of time. It is usually associated with tissue damage, e.g. surgical wound, labour pain. The pain usually disappears when the tissue damage heals. Pharmacological treatment is often useful for acute pain relief.

Chronic pain:

is defined as pain that lasts longer than three months. e.g. cancer pain, low back pain, neuralgia. This type of pain may need a combination of treatments, for instance, pharmacological, physical, psychological and interventional treatments.

2. Talking about your pain

You are the best person to describe your own pain. It is very important to tell your doctor or nurse frankly about the location, nature and severity of your pain.

Tools to describe the severity of pain:

Numerical Pain Scale



Patients can express how much pain they are having by choosing a number from 0 (no pain) to 10 (the worst possible pain)

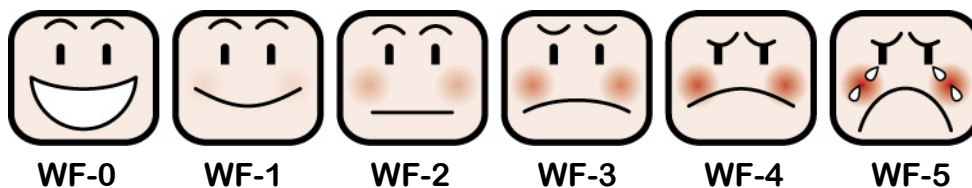
Categorical Pain Scale

It has five categories:



Pain Faces Scale

It consists of six faces with different facial expression. The scale ranges from a happy face suggesting no pain to a crying face suggesting severe pain.



Patients can choose the face that best describes how they are feeling

3. **Managing Pain**

- For acute pain conditions, good pain control is important because, apart from relieving the painful sensation, it facilitates the recovery process, which in turn prevents complications such as deep vein thrombosis, pneumonia etc.
- For chronic pain conditions, better pain control can improve functional outcomes and quality of life.

Analgesics (*Multimodal analgesia is often used for better pain relief)

Category	Examples
Common agents	Paracetamol, Non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
Opioids	Morphine, fentanyl, remifentanyl, codeine, methadone, tramadol
Adjuvant	Corticosteroids, Anti-convulsants, Antidepressants

Routes of drug administration

Route	Way of administration
■ Oral	taken in the form of pills, tablets, capsules or syrup
■ Rectal	medications are absorbed slowly through the blood vessels in rectum
■ Transdermal	medication is absorbed through the skin into the bloodstream
■ Subcutaneous	drug is injected and deposited into the subcutaneous tissue and absorbed into the blood stream
■ Intramuscular	drug is injected and deposited into a muscle and absorbed into the blood stream
■ Intravenous	drug is delivered through a fine catheter inserted into a superficial vein. In some cases, a patient-controlled-analgesia (PCA) pump is used. With PCA, you press a button to give yourself a bolus of pain killer through the intravenous catheter when you experience pain
■ Spinal analgesia	analgesic medications are injected to block the spinal nerves to decrease pain
■ Nerve Block	analgesic medications are deposited to block a peripheral nerve or nerve plexus to relieve pain

Other pain-reduction measures

- Physical measures
e.g. physiotherapy, occupational therapy
- Psychological technique
e.g. meditation, relaxation, hypnosis, Cognitive-behavioral treatment
- Spiritual support
- Interventional treatment
e.g. celiac plexus block

4. **Remember**

- ✓ It is much easier to prevent than to treat severe pain. Ask for pain killer when pain begins or before pain-inducing procedures.
- ✓ Report your pain to your healthcare professionals in details.
- ✓ In some situations, moderate to severe pain may “break-through” the existing pain relief. An extra dose or a different analgesic may be given on your request.
- ✓ If your pain is not adequately relieved, tell your doctor or nurse.
- ✓ Report any side effects (e.g. nausea, vomiting, dizziness, dry mouth, constipation) related to pain medication. Most side effects can be managed.
- ✓ Opioid analgesics are very effective for pain relief. They carry minimal risk of addiction. Less than 1% of all persons receiving opioid analgesics become addicted.
- ✓ If you have any question or concern about your pain management, do not hesitate to inform and discuss with your healthcare professionals.