

Caregiver Care Guide:

Pain

What is Pain?

Pain comes in many forms, from many causes. Each person experiences pain differently. There are many options for treating pain. Pain is whatever the person says it is – Believe them!

What are some Symptoms of Pain?

- Verbal signs: Statements of pain, moaning, yelling out
- Non-Verbal signs: Furrowed brow, frowning, guarding of area
- Irritability, Crying, Heavy Breathing
- Shifting or restless in bed or chair
- Withdrawing, isolation
- Not wanting to move or be active

What can be done to Manage Pain?

- Track and record the pain history and the actions/medications taken
 - Document the quantity and effectiveness of any medications taken
- Medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be used for mild pain
- Medications known as opioids may be used for moderate to severe pain
 - Examples include morphine, hydromorphone, fentanyl, oxycodone and tramadol
 - Typically, opioids are prescribed in two ways:
 - 1) Routine scheduled (ex. every 8 hours): The goal of scheduled medication is to achieve a relatively consistent and acceptable level of pain relief day and night
 - 2) As needed (“PRN”): The “as needed” opioid is used as a rescue dose if the scheduled medication is not relieving the pain at that moment
- Non-medication tips that can aid in providing pain relief:
 - Relaxation/Meditation: stress and anxiety can increase pain; utilize techniques to help calm
 - Heat: If the care team advises, heat can help relax muscles and joints and provide distraction
 - Cold: If the care team advises, cold can aid in reducing swelling and provide distraction
 - Light Massage: If the care team advises, light massage can provide relief and distraction

What are some of the Side Effects of Treating Pain?

- Sleepiness: Pain medications can cause drowsiness with initial doses or a dose increase. (This should subside, but if bothersome, tell your team)
- Constipation is very common with pain medication; take a laxative regularly, as prescribed. (If tolerable, also drink fluids)
- Other possible side effects: dry mouth, nausea, itching, slight confusion. Tell your care team if you notice any of these side effects. Many are treatable and may subside.

If Pain is not managed or medication side effects do not improve, notify the hospice team.