



## MANAGING PAIN

Pain comes in many forms, many causes, and each person experiences it differently. Many people don't realize that pain is not only physical, but can have emotional and spiritual effects or causes. Pikes Peak Hospice always believes a patient's complaints of pain. Patients may not be able to speak or describe their pain in the late stages of dementia, if they have had a stroke, or in the late stages of many other diseases. However, just because they cannot speak does not mean they are not experiencing pain.

Little changes in the patient's mood or behavior may mean the patient has pain. Always ask the patient if you suspect they may be in pain, or ask a member of the Care Team to help assess them. Patients who are unable to speak or have dementia may still have the ability to answer questions by nodding or with eye movements. Family members may be the first to notice these signs.

**BELIEVE THE PATIENT!** Remember, pain is whatever the person says it is, occurring whenever and wherever the person says it does.

### Signs and Symptoms of Pain:

- Facial expressions such as grimacing, frowning, looking sad, wrinkling of the brow; looking sad, worried or afraid with no obvious reason
- Moaning, groaning or crying out
- Saying things about general hurting, aching or unspecific sensations, like "I hurt all over," or "It feels funny/bad."
- Restlessness or agitation: pacing, calling out, rocking, fidgeting, wringing or clenching
- Rubbing or holding, repeatedly touching or guarding part of the body, moving slowly
- Noisy, labored breathing; sucking in or holding breath
- Increased confusion, or irritability, difficulty concentrating or communicating
- Change in usual sleeping or eating patterns
- Changes in usual activity levels, becoming more aggressive or more withdrawn

### Talk to Your Team About:

- Any of the signs and symptoms above
- What does the pain feel like
- When does the behavior or pain occur
- How severe is the pain
- What makes it better and what makes it worse
- The effectiveness of treatment for the pain
- What are the patient's pain goals, i.e. no pain with drowsiness or some pain with alertness
- Side effects of pain medication: sleepiness, constipation, nausea/vomiting, itching, increased confusion
- Ask your Care Team about Integrative Therapies that may supplement current treatment



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### How You Can Help:

- Always ask the patient if they have pain or if they are hurting anywhere. Patients who can't talk or have dementia may still have the ability to answer questions by nodding or with eye movements or gestures like pointing.
- Ask family members and other caregivers if they have noticed any changes in behavior that might indicate the patient is having pain.
- **Always** give medications as ordered. The goal is to keep the patient comfortable and with as little pain as possible. Medications are ordered at certain times to assist in the management of pain, and it often takes less medication to manage pain if it is given regularly, as scheduled.
- "Break-through" pain is pain that happens in spite of regularly scheduled doses of medication. If advised by the Care Team to give extra doses of medication for break-through pain, always give it. Otherwise, the pain could continue to increase out of control, and cause the patient more suffering.
- Integrative therapies are non-drug methods of relieving symptoms, often used to complement traditional medications. This can be requested through your Care Team.
  - **Touch Therapy** – involves rubbing of hands and feet with aromatherapy oils by trained volunteers. Very relaxing and helpful for breakthrough pain.
  - **Aromatherapy** - uses essential oils from plants to stimulate senses and promote relief and peace.
  - **Soothing Sounds** - involves a person participating with music by beating a rhythm or singing a song, or listening intently to the music of their choice.
  - **Animal Companions** – interaction with certified therapy dogs can relieve stress and help relieve pain by lowering blood pressure.
  - **Energy Work- Reiki** (pronounced Ray-key) **Healing Touch, Craniosacral** - uses "laying on hands," providing a gentle touch for "energy flow."

**Need more information or help? Call 633-3400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get live help. Thank you for letting us help care for you and your loved ones.**