

Pain in Children

How do we handle pain in children?

We take your child's pain seriously. We are committed to your child's comfort. Our team will work together with you and your child to manage any pain.

What are some facts about pain?

- Pain is complex and each person responds differently.
- Everyone has pain at some time in their life. Even young babies have pain.
- Pain can be short or long lasting.
- Pain can be caused by injury, illness, surgery or medical tests.
- Pain can cause stress, worry, sadness, anger, feeling tired, slow healing, and other health problems.
- Pain is best managed when a person's physical and psychological needs are met.
- Preventing pain or treating pain early is best for your child's overall health and well being.

How is a child's pain measured?

- Your child is the best source of information about their pain. Your child should tell the team about the pain.
- Sometimes your child may not be able to say how much pain is felt. Your child may be too sick, too young or too scared.
- You know your child best. Tell the team when your child is in pain.
- Children's Hospital uses pain scales to help rate your child's pain. You or your child may be asked to use the pain scales. This will help us know how much pain they are having.
 - The N-PASS scale is used to measure neonatal pain, agitation, and sedation.
 - The FLACC behavioral scale is used ages 2 months to 7 years who cannot tell us or use other scales. The score is based on your child's behavior.
 - The scale used for children age 3 to 7 years is the Wong-Baker Scale. Your child will point to the face that matches how they feel.
 - Children over 7 years old may use the Numeric Scale. Your child chooses the number that matches how they feel.
- The pain rating will help us know what is working to manage your child's pain.

What are pain treatments?

Your child's treatment will depend on the specific condition and needs. There are different ways to help manage pain. Your child's pain may be relieved with one pain treatment. Sometimes it takes more than one treatment.

- Some treatments are very helpful and do not use medicine:
 - Reading a book, playing games, music, coloring, and crafts can help take your child's mind away from the pain.
 - Touching, rocking, stroking, swaddling, cuddling or massaging can comfort.
 - Applying heat, cold or vibration can help.
 - Deep breathing and mental imagery can help.
 - Aromatherapy uses the sense of smell to reduce pain.
- Medicine may be needed to help with your child's pain. There are many different pain medicines. These may be given in different ways:
 - Pain pills, liquids, shots or patches are the usual ways. Some are Hydrocodone with Acetaminophen (Lortab, Lorcet, Norco); Oxycodone alone or with Acetaminophen (Roxicodone, Percocet, Oxycontin); Tramadol (Ultram); and Morphine.
 - PCA (Patient Controlled Analgesia): Your child controls when pain medicine is given. There is a button to push that releases the medicine into an IV (a tube that has been placed in a vein).
 - Numbing medicine can be placed on the skin before starting an IV or drawing blood.
 - A special tube (catheter) can be used to deliver pain medicine near nerves in the body.

What are side effects of pain medicine?

- Upset stomach
- Vomiting
- Confusion and risk of accidents when driving or biking
- Serious interactions with alcohol and other medicines which depress the brain
- Tolerance, addiction, physical dependency and withdrawal symptoms
- Overdose, especially when different forms of pain medicines are used together, such as those taken by mouth and in a patch.
- Constipation
- Itching
- Falling risks
- Wheezing

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