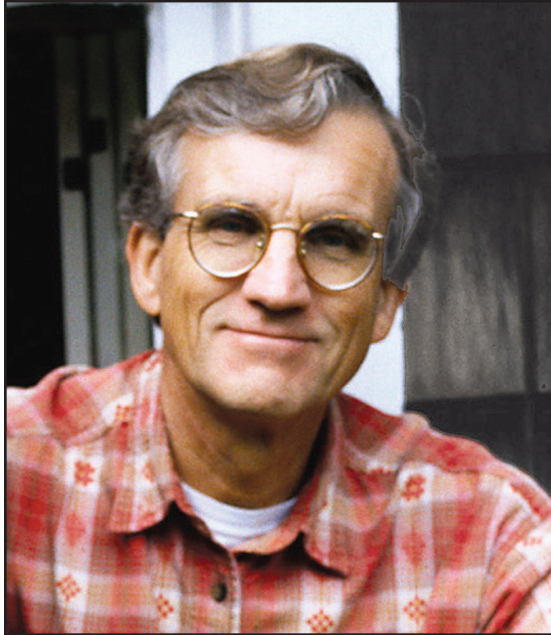


Pain



“I was worried about getting addicted to pain medicine. Then I talked with my doctor. She told me that **treating pain is an important part of good cancer treatment**. So now I take my pain medicine on time and am able to enjoy life more!”

Call the doctor or nurse if:

- **The pain isn't getting better or going away**
- **The pain comes on quickly**
- **The pain makes it hard to eat, sleep, work, or play**
- **You feel new pain**
- **The pain medicine is not working as fast or for as long as it used to**

It's important to treat pain.

If you find that you are in pain, don't put up with it. There are many medicines to help lower or get rid of pain. Talk with your doctor to learn about medicine that can help you. Ask what other things, like massage or acupuncture, could also help. Remember, being in less pain will help you feel stronger and better.

Give your doctor or nurse a list of all of the medicines you are taking.

Tips to get the most out of your pain medicine:

- Ask **how much** pain medicine to take. Take the right amount of medicine each time you are supposed to.
- Ask **when** to take the pain medicine. Take the pain medicine on time. If you take the pain medicine too late, it may not work as well.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if the pain does not go away after you take the medicine.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you are in pain, but it's not yet time to take the pain medicine.
- Don't stop taking the pain medicine unless your doctor tells you to.
- Talk with your doctor, nurse, or social worker if you need help to pay for pain medicine.

Keep track of the pain.

Each day, write about any pain you feel. This will help you talk with your doctor or nurse. Use a notebook or separate piece of paper to fill in the information below.

1. The pain is dull, sharp, burning, shooting, throbbing, or: _____
(Add your own words if these don't describe the pain you feel.)
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "10" is the most pain and "1" is the least pain, I feel this much pain: _____
3. I feel the most pain when: _____
4. Things I can't do because of the pain: _____
5. This makes the pain feel worse: _____
6. This makes the pain feel better: _____

Tell your doctor or nurse if you:

- Feel sick to your stomach
- Feel sleepy
- Have constipation or dry stools

If these problems don't go away on their own after a few days, they can usually be treated.



You may need more or different pain medicine.

It is normal for your body to get used to the pain medicine. It may not work as well as it did at first. This is called "tolerance." It happens to many people. If this happens to you, your doctor may change your pain medicine or change the way you take it.

You will not get addicted when cancer pain medicines are given and taken in the right way. Don't be afraid to ask for more pain medicine if you're still in pain.

When it is time to stop taking pain medicine, your doctor will have you take a little less pain medicine each day. This will help your body get used to the change.

FREE SERVICES TO LEARN MORE

National Cancer Institute Cancer Information Service

Phone: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)
TTY: 1-800-332-8615
Online: www.cancer.gov
Chat Online: www.cancer.gov/help



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