

ONCOLOGY

After Chemotherapy Care Instructions

Pain Management

What is pain management?

Some diseases and injuries can cause long-term pain. You do not need to live with uncontrolled pain. A pain management plan helps you find ways to control your pain with side effects you can live with.

Finding ways to reduce pain is important for your health. Only you know how much pain you feel. Constant pain can make you depressed, cause stress, and interfere with eating and sleeping. Controlling pain can help you to stay active, improve your mood, and heal faster.

How is pain management treated?

A pain management plan can involve several methods of pain control. You may take prescription or over-the-counter medicine. You can also include physical treatments, behavioral methods, or other techniques. Some medical treatments can also help with pain. For example, radiation can be used to reduce pain from bone cancer.

You and your physician will work together to develop a pain management plan for you. It can be changed and assessed as needed.

What can I do at home to care for myself?

- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
 - If a dose is missed or delayed, take it when you remember and adjust the schedule. Do not take a double dose.
 - If your physician gave you a prescription medicine for pain, be sure to take the right amount at the right times.
 - If your pain medicine causes side effects, such as constipation or nausea, you may need to take other medicines for those problems. Tell your physician about any side effects you have.
- Hydrotherapy uses flowing water to relax muscles. Taking a warm bath, shower, or a sitz bath can help your pain.

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continued

*When should I call
my physician?*

- **Gentle** massage therapy (rubbing the soft tissues of the body) reduces tension and pain, improves blood flow, and helps you relax.
- If you are going to physical therapy, make sure to do any home exercises or stretching your physical therapist has told you to do.
- Stay as active as possible. Try to do some physical activity every day.
- Think about behavioral treatments to help you manage your pain.
 - Try relaxation techniques (there are alternative treatments for pain management).
 - Try guided imagery (a technique that guides your imagination toward a relaxed state).
- Your pain management plan is not relieving your pain.
- You have nausea and/or vomiting from your pain or pain medicine.
- You had an illness or injury that healed, but you still feel pain.
- You have side effects from your pain medicines.

If you cannot reach your health care team or your symptoms get worse, go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department.