

# Managing pain – what YOU can do

- Be informed
- Be empowered
- Be prepared

**5** ways you can help us help you

## 1 speak up

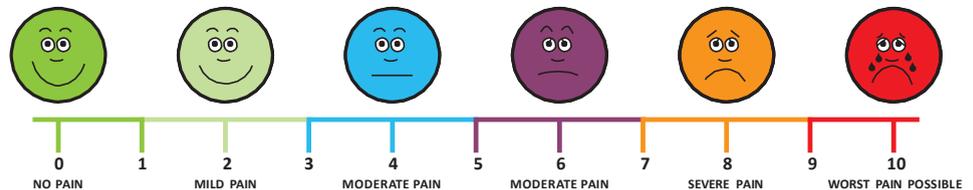
- It is easier to manage pain early
- Tell your nurse, doctor or pharmacist if you are in pain
- It is OK to ask for pain relief



## 2 know your pain

To help us manage your pain early tell your nurse, doctor or pharmacist:

- WHERE your pain is
- WHEN is your pain worst
- WHAT makes it better. WHAT makes it worse
- HOW it feels (sharp, dull, stabbing, burning?)
- HOW much pain you are in when RESTING and MOVING. Use the pain scale above to tell us.



## 3 protect yourself

Painkillers are effective but can also cause side effects.

- Tell us if you use other painkillers at home
- Let us know if you are allergic to any medicines

- Tell your nurse or doctor if you have:
  - No bowel motions (poo) in the last 24hours
  - Darker than usual bowel motions or things like coffee grounds in your vomit
  - Vomited or are feeling sick
  - Feeling more sleepy or drowsy than usual

## 4 get smart about medicines

We may not be able to take away all your pain but we can help you manage it. If you are on painkillers:

- ASK do I need them?
- ASK how they work and how to take them
- ASK about side effects and how to manage them

*It is OK to ask about your medicines and their side effects*

## 5 prepare for home

Before leaving hospital ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist:

- HOW much pain can I expect ?
- WHEN should it get better?
- HOW long should I be on pain killers?

- WHAT can I do to reduce pain after leaving hospital?
- ARE THERE any symptoms or SIDE EFFECTS I need to watch out for and what should I do?
- WHO can help me if I have questions or worries?



# Frequently asked questions

## What are common ways to manage my pain?

- Tablets that you swallow (the most common and easy way to take medicines)
- Injections and drips - Ask the nurse if this is right for you
- Other ways to help manage your pain could include:
  - special ways of moving or coughing
  - deep breathing
  - music

## Why do I need to take paracetamol (Panadol®, Paracare®)?

- Paracetamol by itself is good for mild pain. A single dose is often all that is needed for a headache
- For stronger pain, regular (4 times a day) paracetamol helps you keep on top of the pain and reduce the amount of stronger pain medicines you might need

## What are strong painkillers and what are their side effects?

- Strong painkillers are medicines like tramadol, codeine, oxycodone and morphine
- Some of their side effects might be:
  - constipation
  - nausea and vomiting
  - sleepiness
  - dizziness
- To prevent and treat side effects, you may be given additional medicines such as laxatives to help you go to the toilet (pass a bowel motion or 'poo')
- Tell your nurse, doctor or pharmacist if you experience any side effects so they can be treated early

## Can I get addicted to painkillers?

- When painkillers are taken in the right way, they are NOT addictive
- Pain usually gets better with time as you recover

*If you have any other questions ask your nurse,  
doctor or pharmacist*