



## CANCER PAIN

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[www.children-cancer.org](http://www.children-cancer.org)

1-800-5FAMILY

Cancer pain may come from the type of cancer your child has, the treatment your child receives, painful procedures, or even from something unrelated to cancer. As a parent of a child with cancer, you are your child's best advocate. If your child is in pain, your child has the right to pain relief. Talk with a member of your child's treatment team to discuss your child's options. Below is a bill of rights for people experiencing pain.

### PAIN CARE BILL OF RIGHTS:

**The right** to have your report of pain taken seriously and to be treated with dignity and respect by doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals.

**The right** to have your pain thoroughly assessed and promptly treated.

**The right** to be informed by your doctor about what may be causing your pain, possible treatments, and the benefits, risks and costs of each.

**The right** to participate actively in decisions about how to manage your pain.

**The right** to have your pain reassessed regularly and your treatment adjusted if your pain has not been eased.

**The right** to be referred to a pain specialist if your pain persists.

**The right** to get clear and prompt answers to your questions, take time to make decisions, and refuse a particular type of treatment if you choose.

# ***How do I talk with my doctor or nurse about pain?***

**Speak up! Tell your doctor or nurse that you're in pain.** It is not a sign of personal weakness to tell them about your pain. Pain is a common medical problem that requires urgent attention. So don't be embarrassed or afraid to talk about it.

**Tell your doctor or nurse where it hurts.** Do you have pain in one place or several places? Does the pain seem to move around?

**Describe how much your pain hurts.** On a scale from 0 to 10, zero means no pain at all and 10 means the worst pain you can imagine. In the past week, what was the highest level of pain you felt? When did you feel it? What were you doing at the time? When did it hurt the least? How bad does it hurt right now?

**Describe what makes your pain better or worse.** Is the pain always there, or does it go away sometimes? Does the pain get worse when you move in certain ways? Do other things make it better or worse?

**Describe what your pain feels like.** Use specific words like sharp, stabbing, dull, aching, burning, shock-like, tingling, throbbing, deep, pressing, etc.

**Explain how the pain affects your daily life.** Can you sleep? Work? Exercise? Are you able to do activities with family and friends? Can you concentrate on tasks? How is your mood? Are you sad? Irritable? Depressed? Do you feel unable to cope?

**Tell your doctor or nurse about past treatments for pain.** Describe any medical treatments you've had such as medication or surgery, and mention other approaches you've tried. Have you done massage, yoga or meditation? Applied heat or cold to the painful areas? Exercised? Taken over-the-counter medications, or supplements such as vitamins, minerals, and herbal remedies? Tried other treatments? Explain what worked and what didn't.

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**Toll-free information line  
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