

Questions?

What if I already take pain medicines?

Tell your doctor if you are taking pain medicines. This will help your doctor decide on the best treatment for you.

How often will you check on me?

You will be checked every few minutes to every few hours, depending on your condition. You can also press the nurse call button whenever you need help or want to see someone.

Who will check on me?

Your nurses will check you most often, and your treating doctor will usually see you each day. If you have had surgery and are using special pain medications, nurses and doctors from the hospital's Acute Pain Service will also visit you each day.

Will this mean all my pain will be gone?

Although we would like to take away all the pain, in reality it often cannot be removed completely.

We aim to make you as comfortable as possible, especially when moving around and doing things that you need to do to get better.

Are pain medicines bad for you or addictive?

No. Having pain medicines to ease short-term pain is not addictive. However, all medications may produce side effects, so you must tell the medical staff if you feel sick, very sleepy or have any other effects that you think may be caused by the pain medicines.

More questions?

Write any questions you have here as a reminder to ask your nurse or doctor.

Managing your pain

How **you** can help us
reduce your pain

Disclaimer: This health information is for general education purposes only. Please consult with your health professional to make sure the information is right for you.

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This document is also available in ten languages and can be accessed on the Internet at www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities/acute/

We care about your pain – you can help too...

Understanding your pain

By controlling your pain, we can help you recover faster.

To do that, we need to understand your pain. We will ask you often to rate your pain. That means telling us how you feel and how strong the pain is. This information helps us understand how you feel and what works best for you.

Rating your pain

While you are in hospital you will be asked to rate your pain. The most common ways to rate your pain are using a 'pain ruler' or a number. A pain ruler has a sliding pointer that you position to show how much pain you are feeling.

Putting the pointer at the far left of the ruler indicates 'No Pain', while the far right indicates 'Worst Pain Ever'. We will ask you to place the pointer in the position that best represents how much pain you are feeling. We will also ask you to rate your pain after moving or coughing – to see if that makes a difference.

The pain ruler



Not much pain at all

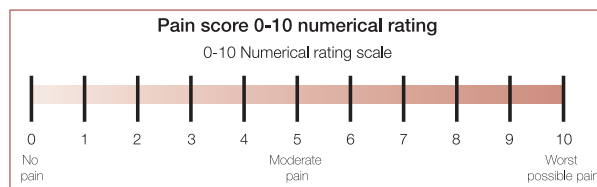


Quite a lot of pain

The pain ruler doesn't suit everyone. Instead, you may be asked to rate your pain as a number between 0 and 10.

Rating pain from 0 to 10

Pain is scored on a scale, from 0 to 10, with 0 being 'No Pain' and 10 being 'Worst Pain Ever'.



As well as rating the strength of the pain, telling us where your pain is coming from and how it feels (e.g. aching, burning, stabbing) can help us work out what is causing the pain and how best to treat it.

Ask for pain relief

Ask for pain relief before you get too uncomfortable. It is harder to ease pain once it has taken hold. Tell your nurse or doctor about any pain that doesn't get better, even if you have taken pain medicine.

Treating your pain

Your pain may be treated in a number of ways. It depends on the type and location of the pain and what works best for you. Talk to your doctors and nurses to decide on the best pain treatment.

Some options include:

- **Tablets**
- **Occasional injections**
- **Continuous drip** of pain medicine
- **Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)** – small doses of pain medicine you control
- **Local anaesthetics** – given near your wound to block the pain
- **Epidural/Spinal** – given into your back to block pain
- **Special techniques** – used to minimise pain.