



# Pain and pain management

Information for people living in or visiting the residential aged care facility

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Pain is our body's way of telling us that something is wrong – it can be physical or emotional.

Pain is not a normal part of ageing.

Everyone's experience of pain is different.

Pain may be acute (resolves quickly) or persistent (always there).

Access to pain relief is a human right and should be available; however, completely resolving all pain may not always be possible.

## Signs of pain

If you are unable to let staff know you are in pain, your family and friends may notice changes in your physical appearance, behaviour or body language that may show you are in pain.

These changes might include:

- agitation, restlessness, and aggression
- crying or calling out, especially when moved
- limping, guarding or holding an area of the body
- grimacing, frowning or grinding the teeth
- not wanting to eat
- changes in usual sleep patterns.

If your family or friends notice any of these changes they can alert a staff member so you can be assessed for pain and the pain can potentially be managed or relieved.

## Ways to manage pain

Staff are responsible for assessing and managing pain levels that are acceptable to you.

There are medicines that are used to manage pain and may be prescribed by a doctor.

As well as medicines there are other ways to support the management of pain.

These include:

- physical therapies such as physiotherapy and hydrotherapy
- massage or the application of heat/cold packs to an area
- rest.



If you are unable to tell the staff what works for you, your family members or friends can help staff by supplying information that will help assess and manage your pain. They may know what was used to manage your pain in the past; informing the staff about this is helpful.

Staff may refer you to others to help manage the pain such as a physiotherapist, palliative care or pain specialist, complementary medicine therapist or psychologist. These referrals will be discussed with you and your family and friends.

## Working together

You, your family and friends are important members of the care team. You know what is normal for you.

Your family and friends may be the first to notice that you are in pain, and they should let staff know of their concerns.

Don't wait to see if things get better – it is always best to get help early.

Working with staff will help in managing your pain.

Talk to staff and ask questions. They need your help to give you the best care possible.

## Questions to ask staff

- What is the cause of the pain?
- How can the pain be managed?
- What if I can no longer tell you about pain?
- Will my family or friends be able to tell you I have pain?



## Want to know more?

Read about pain and pain management, visit the [Better Health Channel](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/conditionsandtreatments/pain) <<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/conditionsandtreatments/pain>>.

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