

Reducing Barriers to Pain and Fatigue Management



How to Assess and Treat Your Pain

Key Points:

- It is best to control pain before it becomes severe and hard to manage.
- Patients deserve the best pain relief.

How to Assess Pain:

- Rate it – use a 0 – 10 scale (0 = no pain to 10 = worst pain).
- Describe it (Is it sharp? Shooting? Dull? Where is it? What makes it better or worse?)
- If your healthcare providers forget to ask you to rate your pain, please tell them because **it is important to know if you are in pain.**

How to Treat Pain:

- There are many kinds of medications available and many ways of giving them.
- If one doesn't work well for you, other kinds may be tried.
- Addiction occurs rarely in people who are taking medications for pain. Addiction is a psychological need. Tolerance means you may need to increase doses of your pain medication. Physical dependence is normal and predictable, but this is NOT addiction. Withdrawal symptoms may occur when the medication is stopped abruptly.
- Pain medications can be taken over months and years and they will still work.
- The most common side effects of pain medications are constipation and sedation.
- Side effects of pain medications can be controlled and treated.
- Please tell your healthcare providers before side effects become severe.

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How to Manage Constipation from Pain Medication:

- The best way to manage constipation is to prevent it.
- Make sure you drink enough fluids.
- Make sure you get some form of exercise each day (i.e. walking). Even a little bit helps.
- Eat foods high in fiber.
- Use a bowel regimen (stool softeners and laxatives) as instructed by your healthcare providers.

Bowel Regimen

1. Start with Senokot S^{***}, two tablets at bedtime. If no BM on day 1,
2. Senokot S, two tablets twice a day. If no BM on day 2,
3. Senokot S 3-4 tablets twice a day or three times a day. If no BM on day 3,
4. Dulcolax 2-3 tablets three times a day and/or at bedtime. If still no BM, **contact your MD or pharmacist.** You may be asked to use:
 - a. Fleet Enema
 - b. Lactulose (45 – 60 ml by mouth)
 - c. Magnesium citrate (8oz. by mouth).

^{***} Senokot S is to be taken on a regular basis unless you are having loose stools.

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