

How To Handle Your Pain

Today, we want to talk to you about how to handle your pain and what to do if you hurt.

While we can't always take away all pain, there are lots of things we can do to help lessen pain and make you as comfortable as possible. And there are lots of ways that you can help, too!

The most important thing you can do is to talk to your doctors and nurses if you are having pain and let them know how much pain you are feeling. To help you describe your pain clearly, we use these two "pain scales."

For younger kids we usually use pictures of faces.

The first face is the happiest because there's no hurt at all. The last face is the saddest because there's a lot of hurt.

You can point to the face that best describes how you feel.

For older kids, we usually use The Numeric Scale.

Your nurse may ask you "on a scale of 0 to 10, how much pain are you feeling right now?"

If you are feeling great, with no pain at all, you can say "zero."

If you are feeling really, really bad and the pain is the worst you've ever felt, you can say "ten."

To help take away the pain we'll often try some comfort measures or distractions first.

Here are just a few things that can be comforting: ice packs, warm packs, a blanket, changing position in bed or moving to a chair, walking around, or getting massaged.

You can even ask your nurse about a visit from Healing Touch - a type of therapy that uses gentle touch to promote relaxation, reduce pain, and help kids feel better.

Distractions, which are things to get your mind off of something, can also be effective.

Singing or having someone sing to you, playing your favorite music,

drawing and coloring, reading, blowing a pinwheel, or doing arts and crafts are just a few ways to distract your mind from pain.

Ask your nurse or Child Life for help or more information.

There are times, however, when comfort measures and distractions aren't enough, and you need medicine. We often use common pain relievers such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or naproxen.

But other times we may need to use stronger medicine -- such as opioids -- to help control your pain.

It is very important that you follow your care team's instructions.

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Don't take medicine unless you need it, and if you do need it, use as directed to keep you safe.

Only use the medicine as long as you need to relieve strong pain.

Never take someone else's medicine, or let anyone else take yours.

Never give or take a higher dose or more than is prescribed.

Don't take medicine sooner than directed by your doctor.

If you have leftover medicine, you should get rid of it. Old medicine in a drawer or medicine cabinet is one of the most dangerous things in people's homes today.

Always dispose of old medicines safely.

I hope that helps you handle your pain.

But as always, if you have any questions, just ask!