

# How You Can Help Manage Your Child's Pain in the Hospital

Pain is complicated.

And for a child, it can be even trickier.

Children don't always have the experience... or words... to tell you about the pain they're feeling.

And pain is both physical and emotional.

But you're the expert on your child.

And you know the best ways to comfort your child.

You also know when something isn't right.

You can help the care team understand your child's pain.

You can let them know how your child has dealt with pain in the past, what medicines you've used at home, what pain medicines your child has been prescribed before, and other ways you've helped your child feel better.

Your child's care team will also use a set of tools to assess your child's pain.

These tools include watching your child's behavior, asking good questions, and using a pain scale.

Here are some examples of behavior clues they'll look for.

Children who are in a lot of pain may eat less... be fussy or restless... cry, grunt, or hold their breath.

They may also have an angry face... make fists... or sleep more or less than usual.

They may cling to you... or kick you... or guard a certain part of their body.

And teens may be more likely to act out.

Here are some questions you or the care team might ask your child: Do you have pain all the time... or does it come and go?

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Where is the pain?

What does it feel like?

Does it pinch, stab, pound, or sting?

Is it hot?

Does the pain make you want to cry?

Has the pain changed since the last time you talked to your nurse?

If your child isn't able to describe the pain well, the care team may ask you: How can you tell that your child is in pain?

What's different now about the pain, if anything?

Is your child having any trouble with sleeping or waking up?

If your child can draw, you or the care team might have your child draw where the pain is... and what it feels like.

Your care team may also use a pain scale.

Some pain scales use pictures.

Others use numbers from 0 to 10.

All these things... watching your child's behavior, asking good questions, and using a pain scale... can help you feel more confident when talking with your care team about how your child is doing.

And that can help your care team prevent pain... or relieve it before it gets bad.

It can also help make sure your child gets the right amount of the best treatments, so your child gets better faster.