



Pain Scale: Describing and Rating Your Pain



Overview

When you are being treated for an injury, illness or a chronic condition, you may be asked to talk about the level of pain you feel. This can be tricky, because pain can be difficult to describe. Pain can cause many types of sensations, and what feels very painful for one person may not feel so bad for another.

A Tool for Rating Pain

To help you describe your pain more easily, you may be asked to rank your pain on a pain scale. This is a very simple test that will help your healthcare team learn how you experience pain. You may be asked to repeat this test again and again, sometimes several times a day. This will help your healthcare team adjust your care as your needs change.

Visual Pain Scales

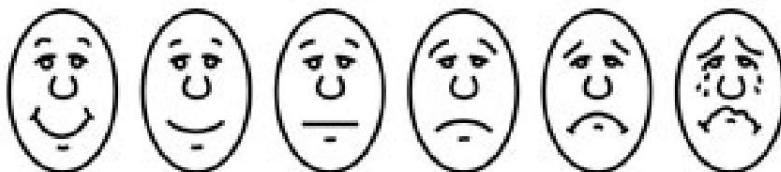
Some pain scales are visual. A common visual scale uses simple drawings of faces that progress from happy to sad. The faces may be numbered. You are asked to pick the one that represents your pain. Keep in mind that you aren't trying to pick the face that matches your own facial expression, you should pick the face that best matches how you feel.

Verbal and Numerical Pain Scales

Instead of a visual chart, you may be asked to verbally describe your pain. You may be asked to describe your pain as low, moderate or severe. You may be asked to rank your pain on a scale from one to ten. Any of these methods can give your doctor or nurse valuable information.

No Wrong Answers

Because everyone experiences pain differently, there is no right or wrong answer for a pain scale test. So give the best answer that you can, and be confident that your answer will help others better understand what you are feeling.



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