

# Pain/Discomfort

The amount or type of pain you feel may not be the same as other people feel, even if they have the same operation. Pain control can help you get well faster. Work with your doctors to make a pain control plan:

1. Talk with doctors and nurses about pain control methods that have or have not worked in the past.
2. Help the doctors and nurses measure your pain. They will ask you to measure your pain on a scale of 0-10.
3. You may set a pain control goal, such as having no pain worse than a 4 on the scale.
4. Tell the doctor or nurse about any pain that won't go away. (Pain might be a sign of a problem with your operation.)
5. Take or ask for pain relief when the pain first begins.
6. If you know your pain will worsen when you start working out or doing breathing exercises, take pain medicine first. It is harder to ease the pain once it has started.

## Pain Control Methods

Both drug and non-drug treatments can be helpful to prevent and control pain. The most common methods of pain control are described below.

### Medicine

- **Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs:** Acetaminophen (example: Tylenol), Ibuprofen (example: Motrin, Advil). They relieve swelling and relieve mild to moderate pain.
- **Opioids:** Percocet (Oxycodone-Acetaminophen), Norco (Hydrocodone-Acetaminophen), tramadol and other opioids are often used for acute pain, such as short-term pain after surgery. Opioid medications can be an important part of treatment but also come with serious risks. Work with your doctor to make sure you are getting the safest, most effective care.

### Non-drug pain relief methods

- Learning about the operation
- Relaxation, such as deep breathing
- Physical agents such as cold packs, massage, rest, immobilization and exercise
- Environmental comfort such as privacy, lighting and noise
- Parents or significant others present
- Distraction such as music, art, TV and play therapy
- For infants, sensorimotor strategies such as pacifiers, swaddling, holding and rocking

### Children

- Children often cannot or will not report pain to doctors and nurses.
- Nurses and doctors will rely on the parents' report of pain.
- Let us know what word your child uses for pain (owie, boo-boo, hurt).

Sometimes a total absence of pain is not a realistic or even a desirable goal. Please share any cultural or religious beliefs about pain and medical care.