

Patient Education And Caring: End-of-Life (PEACE) Series

This is general educational information, see your doctor about your own care.

This brochure was made possible by the ACP Center for Ethics and Professionalism and College funding from the Commission on Professional and Hospital Activities in 2001. Visit the ACP Center for Ethics and Professionalism at www.acponline.org/ethics

Copyright © 2014 by the American College of Physicians

or More Information

Caring Connections

800-658-8898

[www.caringinfo.org/files/public/
brochures/EOL_physicalpain.pdf](http://www.caringinfo.org/files/public/brochures/EOL_physicalpain.pdf)

Hospice Net

www.hospicenet.org

Many people with cancer and other serious illnesses have pain.

Pain often makes it harder for you to deal with your illness. Pain robs you of your energy and enjoyment of life.

A lot has been learned about how to treat and even prevent pain.

Keep a Pain Diary

Write down and tell your doctor where, how much, and when you hurt.

Measure your pain with this scale:



Write down the number that stands for how much pain you're having. Then, an hour after you take your pain medicine, write down the number of your pain.

Keep this information as a diary. Have the numbers with you when you talk with your doctor in person or on the phone. This will help your doctor know the right medicine for you. Your doctor can change the medicine to help you feel more comfortable.

Important Things to Know When Taking Pain Medicines

You do not have to tough it out. Pain medicines really help.

You will not become an addict if you take a strong pain medicine like morphine. Remember, addicts take drugs to escape from life—you are taking medicine to get back into life.

Your medicine dose will be changed if your pain increases. You may get a little sleepy at first, but soon after that you will be alert as before. Ask your doctor when it is safe to drive a car or take over-the-counter sleep medicines or drink alcoholic beverages.

If your pain is present most of the time, your doctor will probably tell you to take pain medicine on a regular schedule to keep the pain from returning. It is better to prevent pain than to wait for it to get bad.

Certain medicines may cause constipation. Your doctor can recommend laxatives and other treatments that can help.

Financial and family worries, anxiety, depression, and religious or spiritual concerns can make your pain harder to bear. There are people who can help, such as a social worker; psychiatrist or psychologist; or pastor, rabbi, or other spiritual leader.