



Pain Management

What You Should Know

Urology Care
FOUNDATION™
*The Official Foundation of the
 American Urological Association*

There are many ways to think about and describe pain. This can make it hard to measure pain. We can think of pain as a physical feeling or an emotional feeling. Pain can also help us as it may be a sign something is wrong or protect us from harm.

Are there Different Kinds of Pain?

Yes, there are many types of pain. Some types of pain are:

- **Acute pain** usually lasts less than three months and often will go away after the cause of the pain heals.
- **Sub-acute pain** may last for three to six months.
- **Chronic pain** may last for more than six months, can be troubling, may cause stress, worry, and/or sadness.

Should I Tell My Doctor about My Pain?

You should tell your health care team how your pain feels so they can try to figure out why you have pain. It can be hard to measure and test for pain, so it is of great value to talk about your pain. It may also help to talk with your family members so they can help you explain your symptoms to your doctor, when needed.

Often, your health care team will try to measure your pain by asking you questions. You may be asked how you feel on a scale of zero to ten. On this scale, zero is no pain, one is hardly there, and ten is the worst pain that you could ever imagine.

How is Pain Treated?

To manage your pain, it is best to treat the condition causing it. Medication is a common treatment for pain. However, medications alone may not lessen or cure your pain. The best results may come from mixing different types of treatments. These treatments include:

- Pain medications
- Physical rehabilitation
- Psychological counseling
- Social support

Is Pain Management Needed for Urologic Conditions?

Urologists may prescribe pain medications for some urologic conditions, such as:

- Interstitial Cystitis (IC)
- Kidney Stones
- Prostatitis
- Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)
- Urotrauma
- Cancer (Prostate, Bladder, Kidney and Testicular)

For major surgeries and inpatient hospital stays, local anesthetics and stronger medications are used. Your urologist may also prescribe pain medication to help after you have had surgery. Talk to your urologist about the pain you are having so they can help you.

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What Medications are Available to Control Pain?

Some people do well with over-the-counter pain medicines such as acetaminophen or anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen. Other pain medications, such as weak opioids, may also be prescribed to relieve pain.

What are the Risks and Benefits of Pain Management?

The benefit of taking pain medication is possible pain relief. The risk is possible side effects. Common side effects of pain medications include tiredness, forgetfulness, stomach irritation, nausea, constipation, vomiting, dry mouth, dizziness and more. Opioids can have serious risks and side effects, so this class of drug is not a first choice for pain management.

It is of great value to tell your health care provider about past alcohol and drug use and other medications you are taking. Your health care provider can be your partner to help you manage pain and avoid side effects.

How Can I Avoid Addiction with Pain Medication?

Research has shown a mix of genetic, environmental and developmental factors are risks for addiction. Before you start opioid therapy for chronic pain, your health care provider should develop treatment goals. These goals should be realistic and consider how therapy will be stopped if the benefits are not greater than the risks.

How Should I Store and Dispose of My Pain Medication?

You should store your medications as directed on the container. Never keep your medications in a place where children can reach. Never share your prescribed medications with others. If you are unsure of how to store your medication, ask your pharmacist or health care provider.

If you have medication left over, do not put it in the garbage or toilet. Follow the instructions provided by the manufacturer and/or pharmacy. You should never collect and store unused controlled substances. If others take your unused medicines, it may cause them harm.

Can Physical Pain Cause Other Problems?

Physical pain can cause emotional pain. For this reason, treatment plans can also include a counselor or psychologist to help you deal with the effects of pain. There are also many support groups available for pain sufferers.

About the Urology Care Foundation

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts. To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions or go to UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist to find a doctor near you.

Disclaimer

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or health care provider about your health concerns. Always talk to a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications.

For more information, visit UrologyHealth.org/Download or call 800-828-7866.