



## Pain

---

Your healthcare providers will try to keep your child as pain free as possible during all treatment and procedures. Pain in children can be from many causes. Children may not be able to say how much discomfort or pain they have.

### How do I know when my child is in pain?

A child may express pain in different ways. Often children can tell you when they have pain. If a child has difficulty or cannot tell you directly, they may express pain through their behavior.

- **Face:** A child in pain may grimace or frown. Your child may have a clenched jaw or wrinkled nose.
- **Arms/Fingers:** A child in pain may have tense clenched fists.
- **Legs:** A child in pain may act uneasy, restless, and/or tense. Your child may kick up or draw up their legs.
- **Cry:** A child in pain may moan or whimper. In severe pain, your child may cry, scream or sob. Your child may be difficult to comfort.
- **Activity:** A child in pain may squirm, shift back and forth or arch their back.

### How pain is managed?

Pain is best managed with a combination of different medicines as well as coping techniques.

#### Medications

The type and amount of pain medication and how it is given will depend on the type of pain, weight of your child and whether or not your child can take medicine by mouth. The healthcare team will work with you to find out what is causing your child's pain and will work with you to make a plan. There are many options that can be used to help your child be as comfortable as possible.

#### Coping Strategies

There are different ways that may help your child cope with pain.

- Help your child get in a comfortable position
- Distract your child by singing softly, telling stories or counting
- Breathing exercises such as blowing bubbles, may help your child to relax
- Have your child imagine going to a favorite place or doing their favorite activity

## Pain

### How you can help your Child in Pain?

Parents know about comforting their own children better than anyone else.

- **Ask your child about the pain.** By acknowledging their pain, you are giving your child the message that you believe that they are in pain and you want to help them.
- **Use words that work for you and your child.** Talk to your child using simple, everyday language. Provide your child with as much information as you feel he/she can handle.

### Common Questions and Answers about Pain

- **Can babies feel pain?** Yes, research has now shown that infants can feel pain.
- **Can children describe pain?** Children as young as 18 months old have words for pain. Children's as young as 3 years old can usually describe how much it hurts by answering "a little" or "a lot."
- **Is pain medicine dangerous?** Before prescribing any medications, your healthcare team will discuss the risks and benefits with you. The benefits of giving pain medication are to provide comfort, improve healing, and prevent complications. The risks of giving pain medicine may include constipation, sleepiness or slow breathing.
- **Should I be concerned that my child or teenager could become addicted to pain medicine?** Pain medication is often a necessary part of treatment. Some children and teens may need to take Opioids (often called narcotics) during their treatment. This is usually for a short period of time and is managed by your healthcare team. Any questions or concerns that you have should be directed to your healthcare team.
- **What should I do if my child's pain is not well managed?** Call your child's healthcare provider about your concerns.

### Contact Us

**For patient care assistance, please call the following phone numbers:**

- Jimmy Fund Clinic (617) 632-3270  
Business Hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Page Operator (617) 632-3352  
Off hours: weekdays after 5 p.m., holidays, and weekends  
Page pediatric hematology/oncology fellow on call
- Life Threatening Emergencies dial 911