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Pain Management

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Pain management includes medicines and therapies to treat pain from a surgery, injury, or illness. This can help increase your appetite, sleep, and energy. It can also improve your mood and your relationships. You and your family will receive information about how to manage your pain at home. The instructions will include what to do if you have side effects as your pain is managed. It will also include how to handle prescription pain medicine safely if it is prescribed. It is important to follow all instructions so your pain is managed effectively. This will help prevent a return to the hospital.

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS:

Seek care immediately if:

• You have severe pain and it is not time to take your pain medicine yet.

Contact your healthcare provider if:

- You have moderate pain and it is not time to take your pain medicine yet.
- The medicine you are taking makes you sleepier than usual or confused.
- You have pain even after you take your pain medicine.
- You have a new pain or the pain seems different than before.
- You have constipation from prescription pain medicine that is not helped with treatment.
- You have questions or concerns about your condition or care.



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Medicines: Pain medicine **may** be given in any of the following ways, depending on the kind of pain you have:

• Over-the-counter:

- NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen, help decrease swelling, pain, and fever.
 NSAIDs can cause stomach bleeding or kidney problems in certain
 people. If you take blood thinner medicine, always ask if NSAIDs are
 safe for you. Always read the medicine label and follow directions. Do
 not give these medicines to children under 6 months of age
 without direction from your child's healthcare provider.
- Acetaminophen decreases pain and fever. It is available without a
 doctor's order. Ask how much to take and how often to take it. Follow
 directions. Read the labels of all other medicines you are using to see if
 they also contain acetaminophen, or ask your doctor or pharmacist.
 Acetaminophen can cause liver damage if not taken correctly. Do not
 use more than 4 grams (4,000 milligrams) total of acetaminophen in
 one day.
- A pain cream, gel, or patch may be applied to your skin on painful areas.

• Prescription:

- Several kinds of prescription pain medicines are available. An example is opioid, or narcotic, pain medicine. Ask your healthcare provider how to take your specific prescription pain medicine safely. Also, some prescription pain medicines contain acetaminophen. Do not take other medicines that contain acetaminophen without talking to your healthcare provider. Too much acetaminophen may cause liver damage.
- Muscle relaxers help decrease pain and muscle spasms.
- **Steroids** decrease inflammation that causes pain.



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- **Anesthetic** medicines may be injected in or around a nerve to block pain signals from the nerves.
- Anxiety medicine decreases anxiety. High levels of anxiety make pain harder to manage.
- Antidepressants may be used to help decrease or prevent the symptoms of depression or anxiety. They are also used to treat nerve pain.
- **Anticonvulsants** are usually used to control seizures. They may also be used to decrease chronic pain.
- Take your medicine as directed. Contact your healthcare provider if you think your medicine is not helping or if you have side effects. Tell him or her if you are allergic to any medicine. Keep a list of the medicines, vitamins, and herbs you take. Include the amounts, and when and why you take them. Bring the list or the pill bottles to follow-up visits. Carry your medicine list with you in case of an emergency.

Prescription pain medicine safety:

- **Do not suddenly stop taking prescription pain medicine.** If you have been taking prescription pain medicine for longer than 2 weeks, a sudden stop may cause dangerous side effects. Ask your healthcare provider for more information before you stop taking your medicine.
- Take your medicine as directed. Take only the amount prescribed or recommended by your healthcare provider. Too much medicine may cause breathing problems or other health issues. If you use a pain patch, be sure to remove the old patch before you place a new one.
- Do not drink alcohol while you use prescription medicines. Alcohol with



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prescription medicines can make you sleepy and slow your breathing rate. You may stop breathing completely.

- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery after you take prescription pain medicine. Prescription pain medicine can make you drowsy and make it hard to concentrate. You may injure yourself or others if you drive or operate heavy machinery while taking your medicine.
- **Time your medicine correctly.** Take your pain medicine 30 minutes before exercise or physical therapy. This helps decrease pain to help meet your treatment goals. You may need to take medicine before you go to bed. This may help you sleep and not be woken by pain.
- Watch for side effects. Some foods, alcohol, and other medicines may cause side effects when you take pain medicine. Ask your healthcare provider how to prevent these problems.
- **Prevent constipation.** This is a common side effect of prescription pain medicine. Eat foods high in fiber, such as raw fruit, vegetables, beans, and whole-grain bread and cereal. Ask your healthcare provider how much liquid to drink each day and which liquids are best for you. Exercise and activity may also help decrease the risk for constipation.
- Follow instructions for what to do with medicine you do not use. Your healthcare provider will give you instructions for how to dispose of pain medicine safely. This helps make sure no one else takes the medicine.

Ways pain may be managed without medicine:

- Massage therapy helps relieve tight muscles. This may help you relax and decrease pain.
- **Ultrasound can help decrease pain.** Ultrasound is a procedure that uses sound waves to create heat applied to muscles.



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- Acupuncture helps reduce pain and other symptoms. Thin needles are used to balance energy channels in the body.
- Biofeedback helps your body respond differently to pain. You will learn
 what your breathing and heart rate are when you are relaxed. That will help
 you get your breathing and heart rate to those levels when you are in pain.
- Electrical stimulation may be used to control pain. Transcutaneous electrical stimulations (TENS) is a portable device that attaches to your skin. It uses mild, safe electrical signals to help control pain. Spinal cord stimulation (SCS) is a procedure that uses a metal wire placed near your spinal cord to help control pain. SCS also uses mild, safe electrical signals. The SCS is placed during surgery.
- Surgery and other procedures may help relieve pain. Examples include radio waves, thermal (heat), or laser therapy. Surgery may also include cutting nerves or repairing joints that are the cause of your chronic pain.

What you can do to manage pain: The following may be helpful if you have mild pain or pain between medicine doses:

- Apply heat or ice as directed. Heat also relieves muscle spasms. Ice may help prevent tissue damage. Your healthcare provider may recommend only heat or ice, or you may be told to alternate. For heat, use a heat pack, heating pad, or a warm washcloth. The temperature should not be hot enough to burn your skin. Apply heat for 20 to 30 minutes every 2 hours for as many days as directed. For ice, use an ice pack, or put crushed ice in a plastic bag. Cover it with a towel before you place it on your skin. Apply ice for 15 to 20 minutes every hour or as directed.
- Elevate the painful area above the level of your heart if possible. This will help decrease swelling and pain. Prop your painful area on pillows or blankets to keep it elevated comfortably.
- Apply compression with an elastic bandage or abdominal binder as



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directed. An elastic bandage may be used after surgery on your joint, such as your knee. An abdominal binder may be used for surgeries in your abdomen.

- Use devices to help you move and decrease pain. Devices can help remove pressure from the injury and provide extra support. Assistive devices include a splint, cane, crutches, or a walker. Knee sleeves and braces help decrease pain by giving your knees extra support. Arch supports and orthotics are devices that are put in your shoes to help you stand, walk, or run correctly.
- Aromatherapy uses scents to relax, relieve stress, and decrease pain.
 Oils, extracts, or fragrances from flowers, herbs, and trees may be used.
 They may be inhaled or used during massages, facials, body wraps, and baths.
- Meditation teaches you how to focus inside yourself. The goal of meditation is to help you feel more calm and peaceful.
- Guided imagery teaches you to imagine a picture in your mind. You learn to focus on the picture instead of your pain. It may help you learn how to change the way your body senses and responds to pain.
- Music may help increase energy levels and improve your mood. It may help reduce pain by triggering your body to release endorphins. These are natural body chemicals that decrease pain. Music may be used with any of the other techniques, such as relaxation and distraction.
- Self-hypnosis is a way to direct your attention to something other than your pain. For example, you might repeat a positive statement about ignoring the pain or seeing the pain in a positive way.

What else you can do to manage pain:

• Keep a pain diary. A pain diary may help track pain cycles so you know



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when and how your pain starts and ends. Include anything that makes your pain worse or better. Bring the pain diary to follow-up visits with your healthcare provider.

- Talk to your healthcare provider about your daily activities. Some
 activities can cause pain to become worse or make pain management less
 effective. Your provider can help you find ways to reduce pain. For example,
 you may need to change when you take your pain medicine so it is more
 effective during activities.
- Sleep in a comfortable position. Use pillows to support painful areas.
- Go to rehabilitation as directed. Rehabilitation may include physical and occupational therapy. A physical therapist teaches you exercises to help improve movement and strength, and to decrease pain. An occupational therapist teaches you skills to help with your daily activities.
- Exercise to help relieve pain and increase your energy. Talk to your healthcare provider about how much exercise to get each day and which exercises are best for you.

Follow up with your healthcare provider as directed: Talk to your provider about your pain management at home. Tell him or her if you are able to do more of your daily activities or if any activity still causes pain. Your provider may want to make changes to your pain medicine or refer you to a specialist. For example, an occupational therapist can help you find new ways to do your daily activities so you have less pain. Write down your questions so you remember to ask them during your visits.

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The above information is an educational aid only. It is not intended as medical advice for individual conditions or treatments. Talk to your doctor, nurse or



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pharmacist before following any medical regimen to see if it is safe and effective for you.



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Hypertension

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Hypertension is high blood pressure. Your blood pressure is the force of your blood moving against the walls of your arteries. Hypertension causes your blood pressure to get so high that your heart has to work much harder than normal. This can damage your heart. The cause of hypertension may not be known. This is called essential or primary hypertension. Hypertension caused by another medical condition, such as kidney disease, is called secondary hypertension.

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS:

Call 911 for any of the following:

- You have chest pain.
- You have any of the following signs of a heart attack:
 - Squeezing, pressure, or pain in your chest
 - o and any of the following:
 - Discomfort or pain in your back, neck, jaw, stomach, or arm
 - Shortness of breath
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Lightheadedness or a sudden cold sweat
- You become confused or have difficulty speaking.



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You suddenly feel lightheaded or have trouble breathing.

Seek care immediately if:

- You have a severe headache or vision loss.
- You have weakness in an arm or leg.

Contact your healthcare provider if:

- You feel faint, dizzy, confused, or drowsy.
- You have been taking your blood pressure medicine but your pressure is higher than your provider says it should be.
- You have questions or concerns about your condition or care.

Medicines: You **may** need any of the following:

- **Antihypertensives** may be used to help lower your blood pressure. Several kinds of medicines are available. Your healthcare provider will choose medicines based on the kind of hypertension you have. You may need more than one type of medicine. Take the medicine exactly as directed.
- Diuretics help decrease extra fluid that collects in your body. This will help lower your blood pressure. You may urinate more often while you take this medicine.
- Cholesterol medicine helps lower your cholesterol level. A low cholesterol level helps prevent heart disease and makes it easier to control your blood pressure.
- Take your medicine as directed. Contact your healthcare provider if you



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think your medicine is not helping or if you have side effects. Tell him or her if you are allergic to any medicine. Keep a list of the medicines, vitamins, and herbs you take. Include the amounts, and when and why you take them. Bring the list or the pill bottles to follow-up visits. Carry your medicine list with you in case of an emergency.

Follow up with your healthcare provider as directed: You will need to return to have your blood pressure checked and to have other lab tests done. Write down your questions so you remember to ask them during your visits.

Stages of hypertension:

Blood Pressure Readings

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Blood Pressure Category	Systolo mm Hg Jupper number		Diastolic mm Hg (lower number)	What Your Blood Pressure Readings Mean
Normal	Less than 120	ard	Less than E0	Keep checking your blood cressure and making healthy I festyle choices. This will help make sure your blood pressure stays at a normal leve
Elevated	120 to 129	and	Less than E5	You may be at risk for hypertension. Healthy lifestyle changes can help get your blood pressure back to normal and keep it there.
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension Stage 1)	150 to 139	ог	80 to 69	nealthy ifestyle changes may be enough to get your blood pressure back to nomial. You may need blood pressure medicine if lifestyle changes alone are not enough.
High Blood Pressure (Hyperlension Stage 2)	140 or higher	ог	90 or • gher	You may need both blood pressure medicines and healthy lifestyle changes to get your slood pressure to normal.
Hypertensive Crisis	H gher than 180	and/ or	Higher than 120	Check your blood pressure again after 5 minutes. If it is still at least 180:120, contact your healthcare provider. If you also have chest pain, trouble breathing or vision proclems, seek care immediately. This is a medical emergency.

- Normal blood pressure is 119/79 or lower. Your healthcare provider may only check your blood pressure each year if it stays at a normal level.
- Elevated blood pressure is **120/79** to **129/79**. This is sometimes called prehypertension. Your healthcare provider may suggest lifestyle changes to help lower your blood pressure to a normal level. He or she may then check it again in 3 to 6 months.



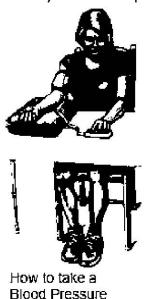
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 Stage 1 hypertension is 130/80 to 139/89. Your provider may recommend lifestyle changes, medication, and checks every 3 to 6 months until your blood pressure is controlled.

 Stage 2 hypertension is 140/90 or higher. Your provider will recommend lifestyle changes and have you take 2 kinds of hypertension medicines. You will also need to have your blood pressure checked monthly until it is controlled.

Manage hypertension:

• Check your blood pressure at home. Avoid smoking, caffeine, and exercise at least 30 minutes before checking your blood pressure. Sit and rest for 5 minutes before you take your blood pressure. Extend your arm and support it on a flat surface. Your arm should be at the same level as your heart. Follow the directions that came with your blood pressure monitor. Check your blood pressure 2 times, 1 minute apart, before you take your medicine in the morning. Also check your blood pressure before your evening meal. Keep a record of your readings and bring it to your follow-up visits. Ask your healthcare provider what your blood pressure should be.





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 Manage any other health conditions you have. Health conditions such as diabetes can increase your risk for hypertension. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions and take all your medicines as directed.

 Ask about all medicines. Certain medicines can increase your blood pressure. Examples include oral birth control pills, decongestants, herbal supplements, and NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen. Your healthcare provider can tell you which medicines are safe for you to take. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

Lifestyle changes you can make to manage hypertension:

• Limit sodium (salt) as directed. Too much sodium can affect your fluid balance. Check labels to find low-sodium or no-salt-added foods. Some low-sodium foods use potassium salts for flavor. Too much potassium can also cause health problems. Your healthcare provider will tell you how much sodium and potassium are safe for you to have in a day. He or she may recommend that you limit sodium to 2,300 mg a day.





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• Follow the meal plan recommended by your healthcare provider. A dietitian or your provider can give you more information on low-sodium plans or the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan. The DASH plan is low in sodium, unhealthy fats, and total fat. It is high in potassium, calcium, and fiber.



• Exercise to maintain a healthy weight. Exercise at least 30 minutes per day, on most days of the week. This will help decrease your blood pressure. Ask your healthcare provider about the best exercise plan for you.



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- Decrease stress. This may help lower your blood pressure. Learn ways to relax, such as deep breathing or listening to music.
- Limit alcohol as directed. Alcohol can increase your blood pressure. A
 drink of alcohol is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1½ ounces of
 liquor.
- Do not smoke. Nicotine and other chemicals in cigarettes and cigars can increase your blood pressure and also cause lung damage. Ask your healthcare provider for information if you currently smoke and need help to quit. E-cigarettes or smokeless tobacco still contain nicotine. Talk to your healthcare provider before you use these products.

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