



## Delivery of Pain Medication

You may receive pain medication in the following ways:

- **Orally** (by mouth)
- **Patch:** medication is embedded in a patch and applied to your skin that you change every two to three days
- **Injection** into your skin, your muscle or sometimes directly into your spine (an epidural)
- **Intravenous:** a needle is placed into your vein and remains there. This may be connected to "Patient-Controlled Analgesia" or PCA. PCA allows you to give yourself pain medication as needed in pre-selected doses from your doctor.

## Side Effects

There can be side effects from pain medicine. These can include constipation, nausea, drowsiness, slowed breathing, itching, confusion and a dry mouth. Notify your doctor about any side effects you experience to see whether changing your dosage or medication will make you more comfortable.

Ask your doctor about ways to minimize these side effects, and know that some, such as drowsiness, may go away as you become accustomed to the medication.

## Remember

You have the right to have your pain controlled, no matter what its cause or severity. Your healthcare team will inform you of many ways to help fight your pain and bring it under control, promoting a better quality of life.

## Contributing to the Community's Health

Frequently people inquire as to how they may make a contribution to the community's health. We encourage you to consider Glendale Adventist Medical Center's Healthcare Foundation whenever you or your family desire to make a difference in the health of our community. For more information, please call (818) 409-8055.

Physician Referral (818)409-8100

CANCER SERVICES  
CANCER-RELATED PAIN

HEALTH CONNECTIONS

## Managing Cancer-Related Pain

at Glendale Adventist  
Medical Center



There are different side effects to cancer treatment. Your doctor will discuss with you how best to relieve cancer-related pain.

[www.glendaleadventist.com](http://www.glendaleadventist.com)

Glendale Adventist  
Medical Center

Adventist  
Health

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## Pain Management

Pain is whatever a person experiencing it describes it to be. The goal of pain management is to give you maximum pain relief with minimal side effects. The key to effective pain control is to treat the pain before it becomes severe. When your pain is controlled you are better able to sleep and eat, are less fatigued, and will have a greater peace of mind.

## Cancer-Related Pain

Pain related to cancer may come from a tumor pressing on bone, nerves or body organs. It can also be caused by the treatments for cancer. Your cancer-related pain may be controlled with a 24 hour/day medicine schedule. But occasions might occur where you have "breakthrough pain" (pain is not controlled). Your doctor may prescribe a different, single dose medication to take if breakthrough pain occurs.



|         |           |               |             |                  |                     |
|---------|-----------|---------------|-------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 0       | 2         | 4             | 6           | 8                | 10                  |
| No Pain | Mild Pain | Moderate Pain | Severe Pain | Very Severe Pain | Worst Possible Pain |

## Describing Your Pain

It is important to describe your pain carefully to your doctor, so that appropriate medicines may be prescribed for you. It can be useful to track your pain with a personal log so you provide helpful information. Some words you might use to describe the pain are "aching," "tingling," "sharp" or "throbbing."

Be sure to describe the duration of your pain. Does it come and go, or is it constant? What makes your pain better or worse? Where exactly does it hurt? We recommend you use a scale like the one above to describe your pain each time, so your doctor can be clear when you are starting to feel pain relief.

## Ways to Control Pain

There are a number of ways to reduce and control pain. They may involve a combination of medication and non-medication approaches. Those without medication may include:

- **Skin and muscle stimulation:** massage, acupuncture, hot/cold packs, vibration
- **Imagery exercises:** calling to mind pleasant and relaxing images to soothe yourself
- **Relaxation exercises:** meditation, yoga, focused contraction/release of muscles
- **Distractions:** reading, music, humor, talking to friends

## Types of Pain Medicine

Many medicines are used to treat pain. You may be given one or more types depending on the type, location and severity of your pain. Always check with your doctor before taking any new pain relievers or changing dosages of currently prescribed medications.

Do not worry that you will become addicted to pain medicine. You are taking the pain medication for a reason – you have pain! Cancer patients don't usually develop addiction to pain medications, and should be able to stop taking this medication when their pain diminishes.

The following types of medications are used to relieve pain, either alone, or in combination for better effect. Most of them will need a doctor's prescription:

- **Mild to Moderate Pain:** Over-the-counter drugs such as Tylenol®, Aleve®, and ibuprofen (Advil®)
- **Moderate to Severe Pain:** Opioids such as morphine and codeine
- **Tingling or Burning Pain:** Antidepressants such as amitriptyline and imipramine; anticonvulsants like Tegretol® and Dilantin®
- **Pain from Swelling:** Steroids such as prednisone and Decadron®