



For many people, one of the scariest parts of cancer may be fear of experiencing pain. And yet, pain can be treated and managed in a way that is very tolerable. Admitting that you are in pain is not a sign of weakness. In order to better manage pain and discomfort, it is helpful to know how to communicate about pain and how to effectively take control of pain and discomfort. Please talk to your health care team about any pain or discomfort you are experiencing.

Tumors can cause pain when they press on a nerve, invade bones, or press on a body organ. Medical tests for cancer or the treatment for cancer such as surgery might also cause pain and discomfort but generally this type of pain is very short-term and can be treated well with pain medicines. Pain or discomfort as a result of longer-term side effects from cancer and its treatment may require more careful pain management over time. If you have more challenging issues related to managing pain, there are doctors who specialize in pain management that can work with you. The good news is: no matter what is causing pain or discomfort, you can work closely with your health care team to find a good treatment plan.

You will find that your health care team will ask you on a regular basis to describe and rate your pain. By talking about pain, you begin the process of controlling it. In between appointments, recording details about your pain and other symptoms in a notebook or journal can be very helpful. Some of the important characteristics of your pain to discuss with your doctor are:

Severity: -How bad is the pain on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being "no pain" and 10 being "the worst pain you can imagine?"

Location: -Where is the pain? Is it in more than one place?