
Pain management is an important part of your child's treatment. At Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, we will work as a team with you and your child to help prevent or decrease pain whenever possible.

Your child has the right to:

- Get care that will prevent or decrease pain.
- Be told the truth about their pain.
- Tell others if they hurt and what they think will help make it better.
- Cry or object when anything hurts or upsets them.
- Get answers to their questions in words they can understand.
- Keep their bed a safe place when possible.
- Watch during a procedure if they want to.
- Be with a parent or other caregiver when in pain whenever possible.

What you can do to help us help your child:

- **Tell us as soon as your child is in pain.**
- Ask the doctor or nurse what to expect about pain.
- Ask about the plan to treat your child's pain.
- Tell us what helped your child in the past when they have been in pain.
- Tell us what you think we can do to help your child.
- Tell us if what we are doing is not working.
- Work with the care team to try new methods to help relieve your child's pain.
- Let us know if you have any questions.

We learn about your child's pain by:

- Listening to what your child says.
- Watching what your child does.
- Watching for changes in your child's body.
- Talking with you about what you see.

We use different “tools” (ways to measure pain) to help your child tell us about their pain.

- For babies and younger children, we use tools to help us recognize signs of pain. Please ask the nurse to show you what tool they are using.
- For older children, we use tools that ask the child to rate their pain from 0 to 10 (0 is no pain; 10 is the worst possible pain).

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Pain management, continued

Help us look for changes in your child's behavior, such as:

- Crying or fussing
- Holding, touching, guarding or rubbing the painful area
- Talking less or getting quiet
- Sleeping more or less
- Eating less
- Not wanting to move
- Making a pain face (grimace)
- Sweating
- Taking shallow breaths or holding their breath

What we do to help:

- **Prepare your child before a painful procedure**

The care team can give your child a careful explanation of what to expect. This builds trust and can decrease pain. You can also:

- Encourage questions.
- Give your child control when possible. You could say something like, “Do you want to sit in Mommy’s lap or on the bed?”
- Ask the nurse to call a child life specialist who can help by talking with your child.

- **Use play and relaxation**

Play and relaxation are ways to help your child not think about pain. The care team can use play, distraction and relaxation with children. Here are some ideas you could try:

For babies

- Rocking or holding
- Breastfeeding or using sucrose during painful procedures
- Swaddling
- Using skin to skin contact or kangaroo care
- Singing and playing music
- Using soft words or sounds
- Using gentle massage
- Giving a pacifier
- Showing a favorite toy
- Decreasing light, noise and other external stimulation

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Pain management, continued

For toddlers and preschoolers

- Rocking or holding
- Singing or listening to music
- Telling stories
- Watching videos or TV
- Blowing bubbles
- Looking at pop-up books
- Playing with toys

For school-age children and teens

- Talking about what helped in the past
- Breathing deeply and slowly
- Watching videos or TV
- Playing electronic games
- Listening to music
- Imagining they are in their favorite place

- **Use pain medicines**

There are many medicines that help relieve pain. The care team can give them in different ways. Talk with the doctor about the medicine that is best for your child. Let the nurse or doctor know if you have questions or concerns about your child's medicines.

You know your child best. Please tell us if there is anything else we can do to help decrease your child's pain.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.