

Your Pain is Unique to You

People feel and react to pain differently. The amount of pain you feel may not be the same as others feel. It may depend on your past experiences and how worried you are about what is causing your pain right now.

Goals for Pain Management

When you are admitted to the hospital your nurse will ask you to rate the pain you are having at that time, and then ask you how much pain you are willing to accept in order to move around in bed, walk, cough, breathe deeply, and sleep. This is called your “goal” for pain management.

Pain Scales

At Clark Fork Valley Hospital, we use a “pain scale” when we talk to you about your pain. The scale will help you explain to a nurse or doctor how you are feeling and the extent of your pain. If you cannot describe your pain to us, we will monitor your condition closely for signs that you are uncomfortable.

You use a pain scale to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10, where a 0 means that you are feeling no pain, and a 10 represents the worst pain you have ever had. You can use any number you think matches how you feel. Your health care team will keep track of how you report your pain to understand if you are doing better or worse. Pain will be assessed after receiving pain medication to evaluate medication effectiveness.

Understand and Ask Questions

Taking care of your pain is an important part of healing. It is very important for the doctors and nurses to know if the medicine doesn't help or if the pain suddenly changes. Don't

worry about being brave or bothering anyone. Knowing how much pain to expect after a procedure, how long the pain typically lasts, and what kind of medication your doctor is prescribing may help you feel more in control and less afraid. Be sure to ask your doctor or nurse any questions you have.

Pain Control at Home

When it's time for you to leave the hospital, the nurse will talk with you about safe ways to take care of your pain at home. Be sure you understand all of the nurses' instructions before you leave the hospital. Follow the directions, and again, don't be afraid to take the pain medications when you need it. You are welcome to call your doctor, your pharmacists, or the hospital with questions about medication at any time.

The more you take part in your pain management plan, the easier the pain will be to control.

Alternatives to Pain Medication

Along with pain medication, or sometimes in place of medication, there are “complementary therapies” that may be used to treat pain. These therapies include, but are not limited to: massage or touch therapy, application of heat or cold, relaxation techniques, imagery, music distraction, aromatherapy, biofeedback, rest and immobilization.

The nursing staff here at Clark Fork Valley Hospital can help you with some of these therapies, but others may require you to contact a specialist in that area. Please ask your nurse for more information if these therapies interest you.



MANAGING PAIN