

Pain Management

Helping a patient manage their pain is one of the main focuses of hospice care. Your hospice care nurse will ask you about pain each time they see you. Based on your pain, they can provide and refill medications and suggest ways to help you be more comfortable.

Follow the pain management plan the hospice care team recommends. It may include over-the-counter pain medications (like ibuprofen or acetaminophen), other medications, or stronger drugs, such as opioids. **Keep track** of each medication, its name, the dosage, and the time given. **It is very important that medication instructions are carefully followed.**

Sometimes pain medications have side effects, such as sleepiness, nausea, or constipation. If you notice these side effects, tell your hospice care team. They can provide medications to ease these symptoms.

Here are some ways to manage pain in addition to medication:

- Relieve muscle soreness with hot and cold compresses.
- Relieve muscle stiffness with a warm shower or bath, or with a heating pad set on low over the area for 10-15 minutes. Make sure to not fall asleep with a heating pad on as it can result in burns or fire.
- Help the patient move to more comfortable positions.
- Gently massage tight or cramped muscles.
- Alternative therapies that distract from pain, like meditation, breathing exercises and our free guided imagery can be beneficial in helping you or your loved one cope. Aromatherapy (scented plant oils) may help also help with relaxation.

If you feel you are having trouble controlling your or your loved one's pain, please call your hospice care team.