

# CONTROLLING YOUR PAIN

Alternatives to pain medicine you might want to try: NOTE—If you have any problems with sensation you should not use heat or cold therapy. Please consult your doctor.

**Cold packs** - Cold therapy can help ease pain for an acute injury, or from painful areas which feel warm to the touch and may be swollen. The easiest way to make a cold pack at home is use a bag of frozen vegetables.

First place a wet washcloth over the area that is inflamed or hurts. Then place a bag of frozen vegetables (peas or corn) and mold it around the area. Place a dry towel over the cold pack and leave in place for 15 minutes.

Another way to make an ice pack is to fill a plastic ziploc bag with one part alcohol and three parts water. Leave the baggy in the freezer until it becomes slushy. Use the baggy in the same manner as the frozen vegetable technique.

**Heat packs** - Heat therapy can be used to decrease chronic pain or to relax muscles which are tight and aching. Many people find heat comforting and use heat to relieve many types of pain. Use a heating pad on the area that hurts.

**Relaxation** - Relaxation is a good way to help relieve stress.

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes
3. Deeply relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face. Keep them relaxed.
4. Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word “one” silently to yourself. For example, breathe IN...Out...“ONE”, IN...Out...“ONE”, etc. Breathe easily and naturally.
5. Do not worry about whether you are able to get a deep level of relaxation. Maintain a calm outlook and allow relaxation to occur at its own pace. When distracting thoughts occur, try to ignore them by not dwelling upon them and return to repeating "ONE".

Continued...

Keeping your pain under control is important to your well being. It will help you eat better, sleep better, and move around more easily and visit with your family and friends.

To help speed your recovery, we will ask you to tell us how severe your pain is by using the pain scale (see below) to report your pain.

It is important to keep your pain out of the moderate to severe range, 4 and above, so do not wait until the pain is severe before you ask for medicine.

Staff will routinely ask about your pain.

The nurses have been asked to give pain medicine as soon as possible after your request.

Please tell your doctor or nurse if the medicine doesn't help your pain. Also, tell someone if you are having side effects.

Pain medications are safe and effective when taken with supervision. People rarely get addicted when taken as the doctor prescribed.

Medication may be prescribed by your doctor that can help relieve any side effects.

Pain or discomfort may be worse after surgery, certain activity and during the healing process.

Taking pain medication prior to walking or exercising with Physical Therapy can make you more comfortable and better able to participate. This may help speed your recovery.

