



# Pain and Symptom Management in Hospice Care

Volunteer Training 2021



“

*Few things a doctor does are more important than relieving pain. . . pain is soul destroying. No patient should have to endure intense pain unnecessarily. The quality of mercy is essential to the practice of medicine; here, of all places, it should not be strained.”*

— Marcia Angell

# Pain and Symptom Management

## Objectives:

1. Identify Signs And Symptoms Of Pain
2. Be Able To Identify Types Of Treatment For Pain
3. Understand Other Common End Of Life Issues
4. Know what you can do to help when you notice signs and symptoms.

# PAIN CONTROL IS A CENTRAL GOAL FOR HOSPICE CARE



**Federal guidelines require all hospice's to make every reasonable effort to assure that the patient's pain is controlled.**

Always ask  
about pain.  
Believe the  
Patient!

It is everyone's  
duty to ensure  
our patients are  
comfortable

Remember pain is  
whatever-  
whenever-and  
wherever- the  
person says it is.

## Signs And Symptom Of Pain: What To Watch For

Pain- Always ask about pain. Believe the Patient! -Remember pain is whatever-whenever-and wherever- the person says it is.

What to watch For:

- ◀ Notice facial expressions (grimacing-frowning-wrinkled brow)
- ◀ Moaning-groaning
- ◀ Crying out
- ◀ Rubbing or protecting a certain spot
- ◀ Moving slowly- pacing or rocking back and forth

## Other Behaviors That Can Indicate Pain

### Anxiety

- ◀ Feelings may cause anxiety-fear of dying-worrying about family
- ◀ Tension or shakiness- problems concentrating- sleeplessness

### Restlessness

- ◀ A condition that usually occurs –especially in last 48 hrs.
- ◀ Fidgeting-pulling at sheets or clothing-moving extremities
- ◀ Inability to get comfortable- moving around-tossing and turning
- ◀ Trying to get out of bed for no known reason

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# Types of Medication for Pain control

## Mild: Over the Counter Medications

Tylenol  
Ibuprofen  
Aspirin

## Moderate

Codeine  
Hydrocodone  
Oxycodone  
Dihydrocodeine  
Tramadol

## Severe

Morphine  
Hydromorphone  
Methadone  
Levorphanol  
Fentanyl



# Myths And Reality Of Narcotics

## Myths

- ◀ Narcotics are addicting.
- ◀ Narcotics slow down respiratory.
- ◀ Will hasten death.
- ◀ It just knocks one out or feels foggy and lose control.

## Reality

- ◀ Rare for terminally ill when used for symptom management.
- ◀ Rare if adjusted slowly for relief  
Desired effect for air hunger.
- ◀ Research doesn't support – needed for pain management.
- ◀ When taken regularly-tolerance quickly develops-should go away within days.

## Other Types of Treatements for Pain

### Massage and Music Therapy

- ▶ Patient and families request both Music and Massage Therapy. These requests are then addressed during IDT meetings.
- ▶ These services are provided by a licensed specialist

### Other Relaxation Techniques

- ▶ Provide an atmosphere that is calm
- ▶ Dim the lights
- ▶ Play soft music

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## COMMON END OF LIFE SYMPTOMS

### Food and Fluid

- ◀ “Are we starving them?”
- ◀ “They don’t want to eat or drink, should I force them to eat?”

The desire to eat or drink usually decreases- this is a natural response of the body as the body system slows down.

It is normal for the patient to lose interest in food and drink as the illness progresses and it may become difficult to swallow.

## How to respond to Food and Fluid Issues

- ◀ Always offer drinks or food-Encourage (never force or withhold)
- ◀ Ask patient if there is a favorite food or drink that sounds good to them
- ◀ Mouth swabs available for dry mouth is a comfort measure
- ◀ Help reassure family members and encourage them to talk with nurse

point of v

**Pain** [pein]

mental suf

sensation

Working together with patient, patient families, volunteers and hospice staff helps make sure our patients pain is controlled to allow them to add life to days.

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## What can I do as a volunteer?

Report any of these Symptoms to the Hospice Nurse.

Be supportive to patients and families if they find these symptoms distressing.

Patients may find holding or stroking their hand comforting



## Let's review some concepts

### Pain

Everyone experiences their own level of pain. Believe them when they tell you.

### Pain can be controlled through the following methods

Medication  
Message Therapy  
Music Therapy  
Other relaxation Techniques

**It is everyone's duty to ensure our patients are comfortable.**

### Myths:

Narcotics speed up death.  
Narcotics research doesn't support this. Narcotics allows the patient to be able to relax.

**Pain Looks different for everyone.**

Restlessness

Anxiety

Physical signs: moaning, facial expressions

**Notify hospice when you notice a patient is experiencing uncontrolled pain.**

# References

Hospice Patients alliance. Pain control: Methods and Standards of Care.

<https://www.hospicepatients.org/hospic29.html>

Advances in Pain and symptom Management by  
Russell Portenoy MD Presentation on 3/7/2016



# Thanks!

Remember to complete your  
evaluation!

If you have any questions, please  
contact Cindy Grawe, Volunteer  
Coordinator.

Phone: 217-223-8400 ext. 4731 or email  
[Cindy.Grawe@blessinghealth.org](mailto:Cindy.Grawe@blessinghealth.org)