

- Only 1 doctor should give you pain medicine. If one of your doctors changes your medicine, he or she should make sure the others know about it.
- Pain medicine should not be shared. Never take someone else's medicine or allow others to take yours. Drugs for pain that worked for you in the past may not be right for you now. Drugs that helped a friend or relative may not be right for you. Some drugs may not mix well with other drugs you are getting as part of your cancer treatment.

You are in charge of your pain control treatment plan, and it can be changed at any time. Talk to your doctor if your pain is not controlled.

For more information, please visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

# About Cancer Pain

If you have cancer, you may worry about having pain. This is normal, but some cancers do not cause physical pain at all. Still, about 1 out of 3 people being treated for cancer will feel pain.

Pain can affect your life in many ways. It can get in the way of your daily activities. It can be very trying when family and friends do not know how you feel.



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Pain can cause you to feel:	Pain can interfere with your:
Tired	Sleep
Depressed	Eating
Angry	Daily activities
Irritable	Interest in work and hobbies
Lonely	Relationships with friends and family
Stressed	Enjoyment of life



[cancer.org](http://cancer.org)



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## Cancer pain can be treated.

There are many kinds of drugs, as well as non-drug methods, to help relieve your pain. You should not accept pain as a normal part of having cancer. Each person's pain is unique. If you have pain, it must be treated to meet your needs. When you are free of pain, you can sleep and eat better, manage your treatments better, enjoy being with family and friends, and go on with your work and hobbies.

Many people are afraid to take pain medicines because they are afraid they will become addicts. It may help you to know that addiction is very rare in people treated for cancer-related pain. Others fear bad side effects. But your doctor can help you prevent or control most side effects.

## Why people have pain

People with cancer may feel pain in a certain area of the body, or they just may not feel well. Maybe they can't get comfortable. Some pain can be caused by the cancer pressing on a nerve, bone, or organ in your body. Pain can also be caused by the cancer treatment and side effects. And you may still have pain that has nothing to do with your cancer, like a headache or pain from arthritis.

## Tell your doctor or nurse about your pain.

Only you know how much pain you have. Some people with cancer may find it hard to talk about their pain because of the way they were brought up. Telling your doctor and nurse when you have pain is important. If you wait until it is really bad, it is much harder to get your pain under control.

## Your doctor needs to know:

- When did your pain start?
- How often do you have it?
- Where does it hurt?
- How strong is the pain?
- What does it feel like? Is it sharp, dull, throbbing, steady, burning, etc.?
- What makes it worse, and what makes it better?
- How much relief do you get from medicines you now take?

## Ask your doctor or nurse:

- What is causing my pain?
- What can you give me to relieve my pain?
- How and when should I take the medicine and for how long?
- Do I need to take it with food or extra fluids?
- How long should it take for the medicine to work?
- What side effects are common? What should I do if I have side effects?
- What should I do if the pain medicine doesn't relieve my pain? Can I take more? How much?
- Will the pain medicine limit things I can do, such as working, driving, etc.?
- Is it safe to take my other medicines with the pain medicine?
- What else can I do to help relieve my pain?

## You should know:

- Cancer pain can almost always be relieved.
- Treating your cancer pain is part of your cancer treatment.
- The best way to control pain is to keep it from starting or getting worse.
- Telling the doctor or nurse about pain is not a sign of weakness.
- You have a right to ask for pain relief.
- People who take pain medicines for their cancer pain rarely become addicted to them.
- Most people do not get "high" or lose control if they take pain medicines the way their doctors tell them to.
- Side effects from pain medicines can be managed or often prevented.
- Your body does not become immune to pain medicine. Stronger drugs should not be "saved for later."
- Drugs for pain affect people in different ways. A very small dose may work for some, while others may need a much larger dose to get pain relief.