

Pain Management Tips During Your Emergency Department (ED) Visit

Pain is a common reason many people come to the ED. People feel pain in different ways. Many things can affect how you feel pain and to what degree a person feels pain. Pain management is a key part of your care in the ED.

How Pain is Managed in the ER

The main goal of your care in the ED is to find out what is wrong with you and to provide emergency care. The doctors and nurses will work with you to find the best and safest way to control your pain during your visit. Please let us know if there are pain treatments that have been helpful to you in the past.

We may use methods other than giving you medicine to help treat your pain such as:

- Cold pack
- Heat pack
- Distraction
- Dim the lights
- Shift your body
- Deep breathing
- Education

Certain TV channels may provide some nice distractions for you. Our ED TVs inside rooms have:

- Chuckle Channel (Channel 10)
- Care Channel (Channel 11)
- Healing Channel (Channel 15)

How to Get the Best Pain Control

It is crucial that you take an active role in a plan to control your pain. Be sure to talk to your doctors and nurses about these things.

Discuss your pain control options with your doctors and nurses.

- Talk with your nurses and doctors about any concerns or fears you may have about pain medicine.
- Tell your doctors and nurses about any allergies to medicines you may have.
- Ask about side effects that may occur with pain treatment.
- Talk with your doctors and nurses about the medicines you take for other health problems. We need to know, because mixing some medicines can cause problems.

Work with your doctors and nurses to make a pain control plan.

- Discuss your treatment of pain in the ED with your nurses and doctors. Ask about a realistic pain control goal during your visit (for instance, reducing your pain enough to get through a test such as a CT scan).
- You may or may not need prescription or over-the-counter pain medicine. You need to understand the different kinds of pain medicines and how to use them safely for your type of pain.
- Make sure you understand the plan for pain control after you leave the ED and who to call if you have any questions or problems.

Non-Drug Methods to Relieve Pain

There are many other ways to reduce pain. These methods can be effective for all types of pain and can boost the pain-relief effects of medicine.

- Cold or warm packs
- Distract with watching TV or reading a book, or as complex as a recording that instructs you on activities to perform
- Music
- Imagery is using your imagination to create mental pictures or situations to help reduce your pain

Just as with medicine, all the methods listed above may not work for you. You will want to try a few methods, both alone and together to see which work best for you.

A Pain Control Plan After You Leave

You will be given a set of written instructions for your care after you leave the ED. Your discharge instructions may include information about a pain management plan.

A pain management plan is a way to organize all the possible ways to reduce your pain. This plan may include a list of medicines and other non-drug treatments you can use to manage your pain. If you need pain medicine, we are only able to provide a limited supply to manage the acute need until you can see your regular doctor. It is important to understand which doctor or clinic to contact for follow-up care or questions after you leave the ED.

Your input into the plan is vital if it is to work. Be sure the plan makes sense to you. You must be able to both understand and follow it. There is no one best plan that works for all people. What works today may not be the best plan in a week or a month from now.