

eFit eLearning Course Handout



- What is pain?
- What are the types and signs of pain?
- How is pain assessed?
- How is pain managed?

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Pain

- Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience due to sickness or injury.
- Pain is subjective – it is whatever the person says it is, existing whenever the person says it does.
- Pain can come from any part of the body:
 - skin, muscle, ligaments, joints
 - bones, tissue and nerves
 - organs inside the body

Kumar & Allcock, 2008; Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, 2007

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Factors that Influence Response to Pain



- The response to pain is influenced by:
 - past pain experience
 - culture
 - gender
 - significance of pain
 - depression
 - fatigue

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Pain in the Older Adult



- Compared to younger people, older adults have more surgery, longer stays in hospital, and more injury or disease.
- These events can lead to pain.
- Pain is not a normal part of aging.

Cornelius, Herr, Gordon & Kretzer, 2017

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Reporting Pain



[Saskatchewan Health Authority, 2017](#)

- Many older adults do not report pain because they:
 - fear what will happen
 - do not know why they have pain
 - feel they need to be “brave”
 - do not want to complain
 - feel they will become a problem for their family
- Many people with communication or cognitive challenges have difficulty communicating pain.

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When Pain is not Treated

- Untreated pain can lead to:
 - poor health
 - poor quality of life
 - social isolation
 - a risk for depression
 - a feeling of not being important
 - a need for help from others to complete tasks
 - skin problems from sitting or laying down
 - poor sleep
 - weight loss from loss of appetite
 - decreased mobility
 - difficulty concentrating

[Cavalieri, 2005](#)

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Types of Pain

- **Acute pain** starts suddenly and goes away, such as pain from surgery, broken bones, cuts or burns.
- **Chronic pain** lasts more than 6 months, such as pain from arthritis, cancer or fibromyalgia.
- Other types of pain:
 - **Soft tissue pain** when organs, muscles or tissues are damaged
 - **Nerve pain** when a nerve is damaged
 - **Referred pain** felt in one part of the body from another part of the body
 - **Phantom pain** in a part of the body that has been removed
 - **Total pain** felt emotionally, socially and spiritually

[MacMillian Cancer Support, n.d.](#); [Cleveland Clinic, 2017](#)

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Signs of Pain

- Pain can be seen in a person's face and behaviour:
 - frowns or scowls
 - sounds such as moans and groans
 - behaviour changes such as not moving, hitting out, swearing, less activity, more difficulty with bathing, dressing or eating
 - guarding painful areas on the body
- Many people do not show signs of pain.
- Speak to a health care provider about any pain.

[Bomba et al., 2019](#); [Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, 2007](#)

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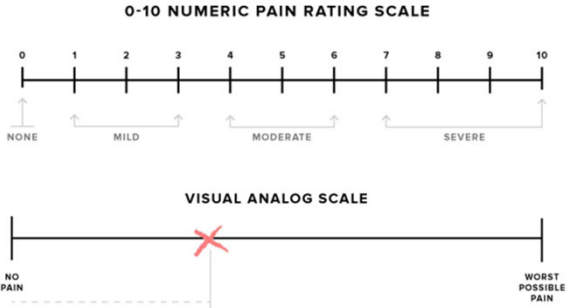
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Assessing Pain

Health care providers may use one of the following scales to assess levels of pain.



Ramirez, 2018

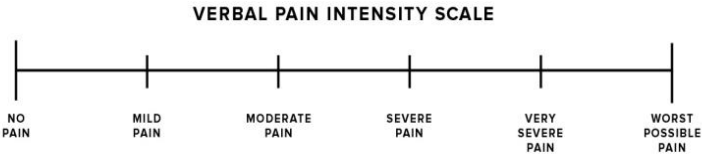
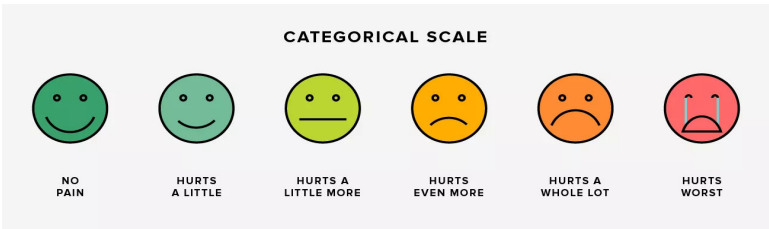
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Assessing Pain



Ramirez, 2018

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Pain Management – Drug Therapy



- Over the counter pain medication (e.g. ibuprofen, acetaminophen) can be taken to help alleviate pain.
 - Talk with the pharmacist or health care provider about how long to use the medication.
- Prescription medication (e.g. narcotics).
 - Health care provider will consider pain pattern, other health issues, lifestyle, existing medications and specific type of pain.
- Pain medications have many side effects that may cause problems.

Pain Management – Pain Therapy



- Other pain management strategies that may be combined with drug therapy include:
 - massage
 - acupuncture
 - heat and cold therapy
 - relaxation, meditation and mental imagery
 - progressive muscle relaxation
 - distraction
 - biofeedback
 - physiotherapy

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You Have Completed the Pain eLearning Course!

For more information on this and other topics, please visit our [eFit Resources for Individuals & Caregivers on www.sagelink.ca](http://www.sagelink.ca).

We appreciate your feedback. Please contact info@sagelink.ca if you have suggestions, comments or have any questions.

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