

What Helps?

Treat the underlying cause if possible and ask the following questions to gain understanding about the pain:

- Onset** –
When did the pain start?
- Pattern** –
When is it worse/better? What makes it better/worse?
- Quality** –
Describe the pain ie. throbbing, shooting, stabbing, numbness, dull, burning, aching
- Radiating** –
Does the pain spread to other areas?
- Severity** –
Mild, Moderate, Severe, Extreme
- Timing** –
Constant, Comes & Goes, Only on movement
- Understanding** –
What do you think is causing the pain?
- Value** –
What is an acceptable level of comfort? ie. no pain, able to go to activities or able to sleep at night. This may be different for each person

If you require any further information related to pain and therapies please contact the Resident Care Coordinator in your facility.



Pain in the Older Adult



“ Pain is whatever the person says it is and occurs whenever the person says it does.”

Margo McCaffrey

No one should be expected to live with unacceptable pain!

Persons have the right to the best possible pain relief.

Pain is not a part of normal aging but not uncommon with some diseases.

Pain can be physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual.

Persistent pain causes fatigue, disrupts sleep, interferes with quality of life and can lead to depression. Unrelieved pain may erode health and overall well-being.

Tell your caregiver what level of pain is acceptable to you. Even if pain cannot be eliminated it can be managed.

Your health care provider will work with you to achieve the best results.

All therapies including medication will be considered.

All medications have side effects. It is important to discuss this or any other concerns you have with your health care provider.

Pain in the older adult can result from a variety of causes including:

- Arthritis
- Osteoarthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Gout
- Diabetes
- Peripheral Vascular Disease/ amputations
- Muscle spasms
- Stroke
- Multiple Sclerosis
- ALS
- Cancer
- Wounds
- Foot pain
- Previous injuries or fall
- Headaches

Describe the Pain/Discomfort:

Words:

- “That hurts”
- “Ouch”
- “Stop that”
- Cursing

Faces:

- Grimaces
- Winces
- Furrowed brow
- Frowning

Noises:

- Moaning
- Crying
- Groaning
- Gasps
- Grunts
- Sighs

Body Language:

- Rigidity
- Guarding
- Holding
- Rubbing
- Massaging
- Body rocking

Behaviour Changes:

- Restlessness
- Irritable
- Pacing
- Fidgeting
- Decreased appetite
- Sleep changes