

Pain Management Matters

What is Pain?

Pain is a complex physical and psychological individual human experience that is entirely what a person says it is. Pain can only truly be appreciated by the person experiencing the pain. A person's pain is influenced by attitudes, beliefs, personality and social, cultural factors, and can affect emotional and mental wellbeing (Pain Australia, 2019).

What is Pain Management?

Pain Management is a medical approach that draws on disciplines in science and alternative healing to study the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of pain (Pain Australia, 2019).

How can Pain Management be successful?

To be successful in managing pain there needs to be a team of people who are able to have open non-judgemental conversations with the person having pain, their family and carers. The team need to understand what the pain means for the person their family and carers.

The person the family and the carers suffering the pain need to honestly keep records (diaries) of the pain so as to improve the information the team need to understand what the pain means to the person, their family/carers. The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has a [pain diary template](#) that is free to download and which will help people to have better conversations about pain.

Open and honest discussions about pain will ensure success in understanding the pain so as a decision will be made about how to manage the pain.

What can Manage pain?

- **Biomedical Therapy** – such as surgery, nerve block and medicines
- **Psychological Treatments** – such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- **Physical Therapy** – such as Physiotherapy, Exercise physiology, Occupational Therapy or other

- **Complementary Alternative Medical (CAM) Therapies** – such as naturopathy, homeopathy, meditation, prayer, art or music therapy, massage, acupuncture, aromatherapy, reiki or other.

The decision of what will be chosen for pain management is made with the team, the person and or their families or carers based on the persons attitudes, beliefs, personality and social, cultural factors as well as the information from the pain diary.

For every pain management treatment plan implemented it will be monitored, reviewed and updated as plans of care in palliative care must always be flexible to meet the persons needs. Medications used in pain control must be balanced against their potential side effects.

Types of Pain Medicines

- **Non-Opioids** – mild pain relievers such as anti-inflammatories and paracetamol
- **Opioids** – medium to strong pain relievers such as morphine, fentanyl and codeine
- **Other** – relieves pain by other pathways such as Gabapentin, clonazepam, diazepam (Palliative Care Expert Group, 2016).

Potential Side Effects of Medicines

Side effects, also called adverse reactions, are the unintended effects of a medicine. All medicines have possible side effects, but not everybody will experience them. When people are recommended a medicine, it's important they are allowed to ask questions about the medicines and their function as well as the potential side effects of the medicine (NPS Medicinewise, 2019).

Other Resources

Palliative Care Australia has [Facts about morphine and other opioid medicines in palliative care.](#)

From the American Cancer Society and example of a [Pain diary](#) (101kb pdf). This is suitable for any person with pain, not just those with cancer

NPS Medicinewise [Personal Medicines list](#)

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