

FAST FACTS: Pain 101

Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage (International Association for Study of Pain taxonomy). There are two main categories of pain: Acute Pain and Persistent or Chronic Pain.

✓ Acute Pain

- Has a distinct onset
- Usually has a known cause
- Short lasting
- Common causes are trauma or postsurgical pain

✓ Persistent or Chronic Pain

- Pain that does not resolve in the expected amount of time
- Often associated with functional and psychological impairment
- May occur without any past injury or trauma
- Can vary in character and intensity over time
- Chronic pain occurs at least half of the days for 6 months or more, after that called persistent pain

✓ Pain Assessment

- To determine best course of treatment, the provider should perform a comprehensive evaluation to determine:
 - Underlying cause of pain
 - Pain characteristics
 - Impact of pain on physical and psychosocial function and quality of life
- Patient's report of pain is most reliable evidence of intensity and impact on function
 - Providers should assess for pain at each visit and use a standard pain scale (i.e. Numeric Rating Scale, Verbal descriptor scale, etc.)



✓ **Pain Management**

- The goal of pain management is to find the correct balance between pain relief, functional impairment and Adverse Effects (AE) of medication used for treatment
- A combination of drug and nondrug treatment approaches may lower the doses of medications needed and reduce Adverse Effects from pain medication
- Nondrug treatment approaches may include, physical and psychosocial therapies.
 - Physical Therapy examples: exercise (walking, tai chi, yogi), Acupuncture, TENS, Massage, Heat, etc.
 - Psychosocial Therapy examples: Cognitive-Behavioral therapy, Guided Imagery with progressive muscle relaxation, music, meditation, etc.

✓ **What else you can do to help with your Pain**

- Write down and share information about your pain with your provider.
- Consider using a Pain Diary to note important information useful to the provider.
- Try a non-drug treatment to decrease your pain, be sure to note on your [Pain Diary](#) the impact of the treatment on your pain.

Reference: Weiner D, Herr K, Rudy T, eds. *Persistent Pain in Older Adults: An Interdisciplinary Guide for Treatment*, 2002, Copyright Springer Publishing Company, Inc., New York NY 10036.

Revised 3/2020