

FAST FACTS: Using a Pain Diary

A Pain Diary is used to monitor pain over time, collect data on possible pain triggers, and provide information for a healthcare provider to make best treatment decisions. It is often said the patient is the most important person in the pain management process. However, if the patient is unable to share information about their pain experience or maintain a Pain Diary this important task is often undertaken by the caregiver.

✓ **Why Complete a Pain Diary**

- Healthcare provider has asked you to track pain.
- Provides a written history of pain issues that can be shared with your loved one's healthcare provider leading to better treatment decisions.

✓ **When to Complete a Pain Diary**

- On a routine basis to track pain, preferably daily.
- For additional acute pain episodes as they occur.

✓ **What to Track on a Pain Diary**

- Date/Time
- Location of pain
- Intensity of pain
- Impact of pain on function
- Aggravating factors (what was your loved one doing when pain started/increased?)
- Treatments tried
- Other problems or side effects

See an example of a Pain Diary on the next page.

PAIN DIARY EXAMPLE

Document your family member’s pain experience on the Pain Diary once per day or any time you see a change in behavior or suspect a new or different pain problem. Bring the Pain Diary to the next appointment with your family member’s healthcare provider.

- Use the [Iowa Pain Thermometer-Revised](https://www.iafpain.org/thermometer-revised) with your family member if they are able to provide a self-report of their pain severity.
- Use the [PAINAD](https://www.painad.org/) with your family member, if they are unable to provide a self-report of pain. If you need this tool, please click this link to access on Geriatricpain.org.
<https://geriatricpain.org/painad>

NOTE: Where a pain rating is requested, 0 is the lowest level and 10 is the highest level.

Date/ Time	Pain Location (Note any areas causing pain)	Self-Report Pain Rating (0-10)	PAINAD no self-report (0-10)	What triggered the pain report or behavior?	Treatments Tried medicine (specify drug and dose) non-drug treatment (e.g., heat, cold, exercise, massage, distraction, music, splinting)	Pain Rating 1hr after treatment (0-10)	Additional Comments

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References

University of Michigan Health. August 4, 2020. *Pain Diary*. <https://www.uofmhealth.org/health-library/abq7017>

MyHealth.Alberta.ca. August 4, 2020. Learning about a Pain Diary. Healthwise. <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/aftercareinformation/pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=abk1346>