

Communicating about Pain with Your Healthcare Team

One of the most **important** things you can do in working with your healthcare team is to communicate effectively about your pain and prepare in advance for upcoming medical appointments. This will allow you to get the most out of the time you have with your provider. Open and honest communication with a healthcare provider assists in providing important information to support the development and revision of the individualized pain treatment plan.

Your healthcare provider may be a doctor, a nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant, and they may be part of a larger healthcare team. Your provider may be a primary care provider (PCP) or a specialist. Whichever the case, the amount of time received during a medical appointment with the provider may vary.

Things you can do to improve Communication with HealthCare Providers & Prepare for Visits

- **Use a [Pain Diary](#).** A Pain Diary is a journal where patients or family caregivers document information about pain episodes, including the date and time, characteristics of pain (see list below) and any other relevant comments regarding medication or activities related to the pain.
 - Location(s) of pain
 - Onset (when it started)
 - Frequency (how often)
 - Intensity (rating of pain in the location identified)
 - Duration (how long the pain lasted)
 - Pattern (progress of the pain over time, does it change?)
 - Quality (description of the pain)
- A [Pain Diary](#) provides a central location to write down questions or information to share with the provider, so you remember them when you are preparing for your visit.
- Consistency use a Pain Diary between each visit to document pain information to share with the Healthcare provider.
- Consider completing a "[Preparing for a Medical Appointment](#)" Tool to document questions and information you want to share at your next visit. Gather the Pain Diary and any other notes you prepared leading up to the appointment and add that information to the "Preparing for a Medical Appointment" Tool.
- Plan to take an updated list of your current medications (including name of medication, dosage, why taking the medication, etc.) to each medical appointment to review with your Healthcare provider.

Reviewed January 2022