Helping the Hurt: Parents & Healthcare Professionals Working Together to Help Kids Be Kids

What will help your child’s pain?

There are a variety of ways to treat pain. These include medications, distraction, cold/warm packs, comfort and positioning. Methods vary with the cause of pain and the child’s age. Individualized plans are made to manage pain in children. The goal at Children’s Hospital is to figure out what works best for your child to minimize their pain. As a parent or guardian, it is important to understand that your child may not be without pain during their hospitalization.

How and when do I know if my child’s pain has improved?

- Vital signs within normal limits for your child’s age;
- Child acting more like him/herself;
- Children’s Hospital standard is to re-assess pain within 60 minutes following a pain treatment method;
- If your child’s pain has not decreased, we will continue to work together as a team until your child is comfortable;
- Child or parent telling caregiver pain has decreased.

As a parent, what can I do?

- Remain proactive in your child’s care, by asking questions and expressing concerns.
- Share your knowledge of your child’s behavior and how he/she responds to pain. Share with caregivers what works best for your child to relieve pain.
- Know that something should be done about the pain as soon as it starts. It is more difficult to ease pain once it has become strong.
- If you know that your child’s pain will get worse when he/she becomes more active, discuss options for pain management.
- If you feel your child needs other support in coping with pain, one of our child life specialists or clinical psychologists is available to help you. Ask your child’s nurse or doctor for this support.
What is pain?

Children of all ages feel pain, including infants. Young babies may be more sensitive to pain because the nerves that control pain are not fully developed. Pain is an unpleasant feeling that may be present due to:

- Physical Injury
- Illness
- Stress

Pain is a personal experience and is different for each person.

Why is it important to manage pain?

A child’s perception of pain is very real to them. Ongoing pain can make your child afraid. Children look to parents and caregivers to figure out how to minimize their pain. When the pain is managed, the child is able to be more comfortable and active. This promotes healing and faster recovery.

How can health care workers “measure” pain?

Pain can be identified through several ways:

- Talking with caregivers
- Body Language, facial expressions, position changes, behavior changes
- Parent/Guardian observation
- Changes in vital signs and physical assessment

There are several different pain tools that can be used to assess each child’s level of pain. There are also tools available to use with infants and non-verbal children. Talk with your child’s caregivers or a child life specialist to explore which pain tool might work best for your child.