

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT PAIN RELIEVING MEDICATIONS?

- Q: How often should I take pain medications?
A: Take medications on a regular basis if you have continuous pain, as instructed by your doctor.
- Q: What kind of pain medications are used for cancer pain?
A: Pain medications include non-opioid drugs for mild pain and opioid drugs like morphine for moderate to severe pain.
- Q: Is taking morphine dangerous and lead to addiction?
A: No, it is not dangerous and will not cause addiction if taken for pain according to recommended guidelines.
- Q: Are there any side effects of morphine and other opioid drugs?
A: Yes, all opioid drugs have similar side effects like drowsiness, nausea and constipation which can be treated.
- Q: If I use morphine or other opioids for my pain now, will it be less effective later on when pain gets worse?
A: No, you should not worry about this. Good pain relief will lead to better physical, mental and social well being which will help you cope with your cancer.
- Q: If my pain is not well controlled, can I take an extra dose of morphine?
A: Yes, this is called "rescue" morphine which should always be prescribed along with your regular dose morphine.
- Q: What if morphine does not relieve my pain?
A: Pain due to nerve damage or bone infiltration may be difficult to control. In these cases, other drugs and procedures are available to help improve pain relief. This may require you to see a pain or palliative medicine specialist.



WHERE CAN I GET MORE HELP FOR MY CANCER PAIN?

Contact the following for help and more information:

- Nearest clinic/hospital
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for pain and palliative care
 - Malaysian Hospice Council
www.malaysianhospicecouncil.org
ncsmgp@gmail.com
Tel: 04-2284140
 - Hospis Malaysia
www.hospismalaysia.org
info@hospismalaysia.org
Tel: 03-91333936
- Malaysian Association For the Study of Pain
(<http://masp.org.my>)

For further information, refer to
Clinical Practice Guidelines
Management of Cancer Pain, available at:
<http://www.moh.gov.my>
<http://www.acadmed.org.my>

*Don't Let The Pain Go On,
Let Life Go On*



Be Healthy For Life

KEMENTERIAN KESIHATAN MALAYSIA



What you need to know about CANCER PAIN

*Living With Cancer Does Not
Mean Living With Pain*



Do you (or someone you know) have cancer and feel pain all the time? If you do, here are some facts you may want to know:

CANCER PAIN IS COMMON AND YOU ARE NOT ALONE

- Pain is a common symptom in cancer
- At least half of all cancer patients will experience pain
- Pain can affect your behaviour, mood, spiritual and social well being

CANCER PAIN CAN BE RELIEVED

- The majority of cancer pain can be relieved by medications which are available in most healthcare facilities
- The World Health Organization recommends morphine as the drug of choice for treating moderate to severe cancer pain

PAIN RELIEF IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

- It is your right to ask for pain relief

HOW CAN I HELP MYSELF?

- Talk to your doctor/any healthcare providers
- Learn to assess the severity of your pain
- Learn about pain medications and how to use them
- Keep a diary to record details of your pain, pain medications, problems or side effects

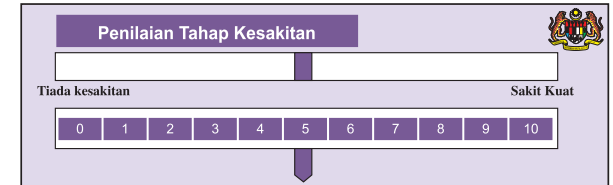
HOW CAN FAMILY & CARE GIVERS HELP?

- Be involved in the patient's management as this improves cancer pain relief
- Empathise with the cancer patient who has pain
- Believe the patient when he/she complains of pain
- Reduce fears about pain medications by learning how to use them
- Participate in discussions on pain management with healthcare providers

ASSESSING YOUR PAIN

The best way to quantify your pain is to use a pain scale which has numbers from 0 to 10. There are several techniques to assess pain as described below:

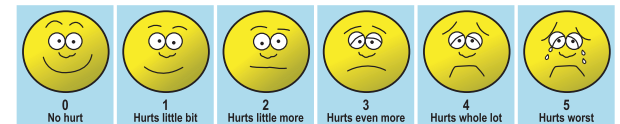
A. Visual analogue scale



A number scale where zero (0) is no pain and ten (10) is the worst pain imaginable. The score can then be graded into mild, moderate or severe.

| GRADE OF PAIN | PAIN SCORE |
|---------------|------------|
| Mild | 1 - 4 |
| Moderate | 5 - 6 |
| Severe | 7 - 10 |

B. Faces Scale



The Wong-Baker faces scale (adapted from Wong DL et al, eds, *Whaley and Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing* 5th ed. St Louis, MO: Mosby, 2001)

Young children suffer from cancer pain too. The faces scale is a useful tool in such cases. Choose a face which best describes the pain.

**IF YOU ARE IN PAIN,
TELL YOUR DOCTOR**

