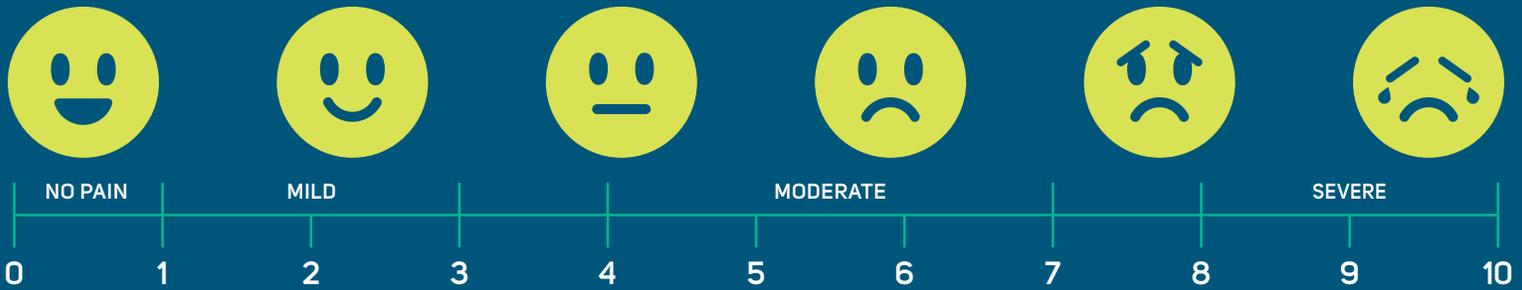




Understanding Your Pain



Pain relief is an important part of the plan for your healthcare. At Torrance Memorial Medical Center, we promise to work hard to offer safe and helpful treatment when you have pain. Whether your pain is caused by disease, injury, surgery, or a medical procedure, it is important to know that most pain can be controlled. We can work together to lessen your pain and help you get well faster.

When you feel pain, please tell your doctor or nurse about it. You are the one who can best tell us about your pain. We will ask you often to rate your pain using a **0 to 10 pain rating scale**. This tells us how much pain you are feeling and how well treatments are working. We may ask other questions to help us understand your pain.

Rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10. 0 means “no pain” and 10 means the worst possible pain. Moderate pain is in the middle, or between 4 and 6. A rating of 1 to 3 would be “mild” pain. A rating of 7 or more is “severe” pain. The goal is to treat pain early before it gets worse.

There are different kinds of pain, and you can hurt anywhere in your body. It can feel like a dull ache, or it can be sharp. Pain can be throbbing, burning, cramping, pulling, tight, stabbing, tingling, or other unpleasant feelings. Please tell your

doctor or nurse the type of pain you are having. Ask questions if you are not sure how to rate or tell us your pain.

If pain gets in the way of your usual sleep, eating, energy, activity, relationships, or mood, let us know. Pain can be slow healing and prevent you from being active. We want you to be able to take part in your care and in the things that are important to you. There are many ways to lessen pain.

Rate your pain before and after you take your pain medicine. This helps your doctor and nurse know if your medicine or other pain treatment is working.

Tell your doctor or nurse about any side effects of the pain medicine. Some medicines may change your bowel movements, or cause you to vomit, itch, feel sleepy, dizzy, or weak. If we know about these, we can try to help.

Together we can make a difference. We cannot promise to make all pain go away. But we do promise to answer your questions and to work with you to find a treatment that is safe and works best for you.

Common Myths About Pain Management

Myth: Medications will cure all pain.

Fact: Medications can help control pain, but they rarely cure it.

Myth: I shouldn't take medications unless I'm in severe pain.

Fact: Preventing pain from developing is much easier than treating pain once it has begun. For best results, take pain medication on schedule.

Myth: Taking pain medication means I'm weak.

Fact: Feeling pain is a medical problem. Taking medication can help you get more out of other treatments.

Myth: I'll get addicted to pain medication.

Fact: For those with no history of addictive disease, the risk is less than 1 percent.¹

Myth: Pain medications always cause heavy sedation.

Fact: Chronic pain can cause sleep deprivation and most opioids will cause initial sedation. However, once the patient catches up on lost sleep, continuing treatment will allow them to resume normal mental alertness and orientation.²

Myth: Effective pain management can be achieved on an “as needed” basis.

Fact: Medications provided “around the clock” have a much better impact on pain management with few side effects.³

1. Joranson, D.E.; Ryan, K.M.; Gilson, A.M.; Dahl, J.L. (2000). Trends in medical use and abuse of opioid analgesics.
2. Vilensky, W. (2002). Opioid “mythstakes”: Opioid analgesics – current clinical and regulatory perspectives.
3. Ead, H. (2005). Improving pain management for critically ill and injured patients.