

Pain Care: Bill of Rights

Your Rights

As a person with pain, you have the right to:

- Have your report of pain taken seriously and to be treated with dignity and respect by doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals.
- Have your pain thoroughly assessed and promptly treated.
- Be informed by your healthcare provider about what may be causing your pain, possible treatments, and the benefits, risks and costs of each.
- Participate actively in decisions about how to manage your pain.
- Have your pain reassessed regularly and your treatment adjusted if your pain has not been eased.
- Be referred to a pain specialist if your pain persists.
- Get clear and prompt answers to your questions, take time to make decisions, and refuse a particular type of treatment if you choose.

Although not always required by law, these are the rights you should expect, and if necessary demand, for your pain care.

Talk to Your Healthcare Provider

How do you talk with your healthcare provider about pain?

- Speak up! Tell your doctor, nurse, or social worker that you're in pain.
- Tell your doctor, nurse, or social worker where it hurts.
 - Do you have pain in one place or several places?
 - Does the pain seem to move around?

**Talk to Your
Healthcare
Provider,
continued**

- Describe how much your pain hurts using a scale from 0 to 10 (0 = no pain at all and 10 = the worst pain you can imagine).
- Describe what makes your pain better or worse.
 - Is the pain always there, or does it go away sometimes?
 - Does the pain get worse when you move in certain ways?
 - Do other things make it better or worse?
- Describe what your pain feels like. Use specific words like sharp, stabbing, dull, aching, burning, shock-like, tingling, throbbing, deep, or pressing.
- Explain how the pain affects your daily life.
 - Can you sleep?
 - Work?
 - Exercise?
 - Participate in social activities?
 - Concentrate?
 - How is your mood?
- Tell your doctor, nurse, or social worker about past treatments for pain.
 - Have you taken medication or had surgery?
 - Tried massage or meditation?
 - Applied heat or cold? Exercised?
 - Explain what worked and what didn't.

**Additional
Information**

American Pain Foundation

201 N. Charles Street, Suite 710

Baltimore, MD 21201-4111

Toll-free information line: (888) 615-7246

Fax: (410) 385-1832

Web site: <http://www.painfoundation.org>

E-Mail: info@painfoundation.org