



When Your Child is in Pain

I am upset by seeing my child suffer and I do not know what to do. I want to comfort him but I am worried that his increased pain means that he is getting worse.

No matter what age your child is, when he or she feels pain, you hurt too. As a parent, you know your child best and are most familiar with any changes, or signs of discomfort and pain. Therefore, you are likely to be the first one to recognize pain or changes in pain in your child. It is important that you give this information to your child's medical team, and make them aware of the changes you have noticed, as well as subtle differences that you can't quite put your finger on. This information will help ensure that your child gets the pain relief he or she needs and deserves.

What to do during painful procedures and tests.

Being with your child can reduce the pain and anxiety during procedures or tests. Prepare your child by assuring him or her that you will be there during the procedure and work together to create ways for him or her to feel better. It will also help to talk with your child about what to expect during the test.

- Be sure to ask if your child can be offered something ahead of time to prevent or decrease pain during procedures that may be painful.
- When your child is in pain, try to distract him or her from the discomfort. One way is to help your child imagine a peaceful or special place using his or her senses such as sight, sound, and touch to relax.
- Use stories and books to distract and redirect your child's thoughts. Let him or her choose one from home or bring several if he or she is hospitalized.

What to do during painful procedures and tests. (CONTINUED)

- Allow him or her to have a comfort object, such as a bear, doll, animal, or headset with music while getting tests, procedures, etc.
- Your voice can be very soothing. If you can't be present with your child, record your voice for him or her to listen to through a headset. You could read, say your goodnight words, sing your favorite songs, or talk about memories of fun times.
- Maintain a positive outlook for your child and offer encouragement no matter how you are feeling.
- Play tapes or CDs with relaxing sounds of nature or music-nature combinations.
- Comfort your child with gentle massage, or hold his or her hand quietly.
- Minimize your own fear to decrease your child's fear.
- If your child is hospitalized, ask for a "safety zone"—a place where he or she does not receive any painful procedures, treatments, or tests. Your child needs to have a place that he or she does not associate with pain or fear. Most hospitals have an area designated for this.
- Give other caregivers information about what they can do to make your child comfortable when you are not there.

For more information:

Caring Connections

www.caringinfo.org · caringinfo@nhpco.org · 800.658.8898 · 877.658.8896 Multilingual

Partnership for Parents

A program of the Children's Hospice and Palliative Care Coalition

www.partnershipforparents.org · www.padrescompadres.org