

## A BRIEF LOOK AT -

### PAIN MANAGEMENT



Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage.






Imagine hitting your elbow on the door. It hurts, doesn't it? That's called acute pain. But, you're healthy and before you know it, you've forgotten all about it.



Now imagine that you are 84 years old. You have several ailments including arthritis, heart disease and diabetes, all of which cause pain. Imagine that this pain is with you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is chronic pain. And, chronic pain is what most of the patients you care for have.

The first step in helping the patient is to make an accurate assessment of the pain and how it feels to the client. Pain is subjective. In other words, the level you can tolerate or put up with is not the same as another person can tolerate. Also, the words used to describe pain might mean one thing to the patient and another thing to you. Add to that cultural differences such as not understanding the language and you can see that it can be difficult to assess the patient's pain. A tool that has been developed to assist in this is the Wong-Baker FACES scale. Just have the patient point to the face that describes how s/he is feeling.

The treatment of pain has to be individualized. What works for you might not work for someone else. There are several medical treatments and other interventions that can be done to help to decrease pain or increase one's tolerance to pain. Of course, you would do only those for the patient that are allowed within your job description. They include but are not limited to:

-  Position your patient to reduce pain. This helps to increase blood supply to damaged tissues.
-  Apply heat or cold to the painful area, as appropriate. This helps to relax painful muscle spasms and reduce swelling.
-  Massage the painful area unless contraindicated. This provides stimulation to sensory fibers which limits the transmission of pain impulses to the brain.
-  Encourage your patient to use relaxation techniques such as rhythmic breathing. These help to decrease tension.
-  Administer medications as ordered and teach the patient the importance of doing so. This keeps a steady level of the pain-reducing med in the bloodstream.

## A BRIEF LOOK AT -

## PAIN MANAGEMENT



### QUIZ

1. Acute pain is pain that is with you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
 True  
 False
2. Everyone feels and describes pain the same way.  
 True  
 False
3. The treatment of pain has to be individualized.  
 True  
 False
4. There are several medical treatments and other interventions that can be used to control pain. One of these is to apply an ice pack if appropriate.  
 True  
 False

---

Signature

---

Date

**A BRIEF LOOK AT -  
PAIN MANAGEMENT**



**ANSWER KEY**

1. FALSE
2. FALSE
3. TRUE
4. TRUE