

(un)cancer

Post- Surgery Pain
Management
Checklist

What you can do to manage pain better post surgery

- Clarify what the numbers on the pain scale mean for you before rating how strong the pain feels on a scale of 0 to 10, usually with 0 being no pain and 10 being the worst pain you could have.
- Describe what the pain feels like. Is it sharp, dull, throbbing, intermittent, steady?
- Point out the exact places it hurts, either on your body or on a drawing.
- Note whether the pain stays in one place or whether it moves outward from the spot.
- Explain when you feel pain. Note when it starts, how long it lasts, if it gets better or worse at certain times of day or night, and if anything you do makes it better or worse.
- Describe how your pain affects function, not feeling. Does it stop you from working? Doing household chores? Seeing your friends and family? Going out and having fun?
- Make a list of all the medicines you are taking (for any reason). If you are taking any for pain relief, how much do they help?
- Talk about any side effects from your pain control medicine, such as constipation or other changes in bowel habits, or feeling groggy or "out of it."
- Bring a second set of ears. Some people find it helpful to bring a friend or family member along.
- Talk about your goals for pain relief. This should include time frame and target pain level. Do you want no pain at all (which can sometimes be hard to achieve), or is your goal to feel well enough to do specific activities?
- Be open to suggestions. Ask your doctor about complementary medicine that can help with pain, for example acupuncture.
- Keep a pain diary. A diary can help you track changes over time. It can also show how you respond to any pain control medicine or other treatment you receive.