

If you have cancer, you may worry about pain. Your doctor and nurse will help you control pain.

There are reasons why people with cancer have pain, such as when the cancer presses on bone, nerves, or organs inside your body. Sometimes, cancer treatments can be painful. You may also have pain from other medical problems that have nothing to do with your cancer or cancer treatment (such as pain from arthritis).



How will my doctor treat pain?

Your doctor will treat most types of cancer pain with medicine. Cancer treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or surgery may also help to reduce your pain.

Below is a table of the types of medicine used to treat different types of pain.

Type of pain	Medicine
Mild Mild-to-moderate pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acetaminophen (such as Tylenol®)• Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as Naprosyn®)
Moderate-to-severe pain Severe pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opiates (such as morphine, fentanyl, Tylenol No. 3®, and Dilaudid®)
Tingling and burning pain Pain caused by swelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anti-depressant and other medications (such as Elavil® and steroids).

You should know that:

- You will **not** become hooked (or addicted) to pain medicine, when taken as your doctor prescribes.
- You should never keep quiet about your cancer pain – tell your health care team.
- You should never think that nothing can be done to reduce the pain.

- Your doctor can control or reduce most types of pain by using one medicine or a mix of pain medicines.

How can I deal with pain?

- Tell your doctor or nurse right away about any pain that you feel. Don't wait for your doctor or nurse to ask you about pain.
- If your doctor prescribes pain medicine for you, take it when you are supposed to. You should also keep track of what kind of pain medicine you are taking.
- Keep a record of your pain. Try to think about your pain by writing down the answers to these questions:
 - what type of pain is it (tingling or burning pain; throbbing pain; sharp pain)?
 - when did the pain start?
 - where is the pain?
 - how bad is the pain (mild, moderate, or severe)?
 - what makes the pain worse or better?
 - does the pain move to other places in my body (such as into my legs)?
- Try to do deep breathing or find other ways to relax. Having tense muscles or feeling tense and worried may make you feel more pain.
- Take as much pain medicine as your doctor prescribes. Taking the pain medicine will not affect the way your treatment works or make your cancer worse.

What are the side effects of pain medication?

Some people do not have any side effects. Other people have a few or many side effects. Your health care team will give you more details about the side effects that you might have, and how to cope with them.

Questions to ask your health care team

- Is the pain I am feeling caused by my cancer or my cancer treatment?
- What medicines will help reduce my pain?
- What other pain treatments might help?
- How quickly can I expect to get relief from my pain?
- What should I do if the pain medicines don't help me?
- If I get side effects from the pain medicine, how can I get rid of them?
- Are there certain kinds of pain that I should tell you about right away? When is it okay to wait until my next appointment?

This fact sheet is meant to support the information that your health care team gives you. It is also meant to encourage you to ask questions to your health care team. This fact sheet does **not** replace any information that your healthcare team gives you.

Living Well With Cancer is a partnership among several people living with cancer, health care professionals, people who represent cancer and professional organizations, and Ortho Biotech. The LWWC partnership gratefully acknowledges the input of the QEII Health Sciences Centre in this fact sheet.

Living Well With Cancer Information Centre

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