

Pain Management with Pain Medication

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When a child's fears and pain are managed, emotional and physical healing can begin. Pain can be managed both with and without medication.

See *A Parent's Guide to Help Children in Pain* for ideas on how you can help ease your child's pain

It is helpful for you to know some of the common pain medicines that your child may receive during her hospital stay. Medicines to reduce and manage pain are given for specific reasons. Some are used to help calm and relax your child before certain procedures or surgery. Others are anesthetic (numbing) creams and gels. These can be applied to the skin before procedures like injections or IV starts. Analgesic pain medication helps manage mild to severe pain.

Your child's doctor may order a patient controlled analgesia (PCA) pump. This pump is programmed to safely deliver the right dose of pain relief medication when your child pushes the pump button. PCA's, however, are not used for young children.

Children differ. Pain control is specific to each child. The degree of pain relief depends on your child and his condition. It may take time to find the best pain plan for your child. A 100% pain free outcome is not always possible. It is possible, however, to minimize pain and find some pain relief.

Your child's doctors, nurses and pharmacists see that your child's pain medications are properly dosed and given safely. Contact your child's doctors and nurses if you have questions about pain medicine and treatment of your child's pain.

Pain Terms

Acute Pain

This type of pain comes and goes. It may come on suddenly and be intense. It usually does not last a long period of time.

Chronic/Persistent Pain

This type of pain does not go away. Doctors may label pain as chronic if it has persisted for three to six months.

Ways to Administer Pain Medication

Pain medication may be administered by:

1. Mouth (oral, PO). Your child swallows the medicine and it travels throughout the body. It may be in liquid or pill form.
2. IV injection (intravenous). Medicine is injected into the tubing of your child's IV. Typically IV's are located in the hand, arm or foot. Medicine is delivered through the body through the veins.
3. IM injection (intramuscular). An injection of medicine is given to your child through a muscle – usually the thigh or shoulder.



Common Pediatric Drugs to Control Pain

For mild to moderate pain, your child may receive:

Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

- Given by mouth
- Given through the rectum in a suppository
- May also help reduce fever

For moderate to severe pain, your child may receive:

Acetaminophen and Codeine

- Given by mouth

Codeine

- Given by mouth
- Given as an injection into the muscle
- Given as an injection under the skin
- May also be used for severe coughing

Darvocet

- Given by mouth

Oxycodone/Acetaminophen (Percocet/Tylox)

- Given by mouth

Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen (Vicodin)

- Given by mouth

Fentanyl

- Given through an IV
- Given as an injection into the muscle
- Given through a PCA pump
- Pain reliever for surgery and post-operative pain
- Provides anesthesia and sedation during or after painful procedures or surgery

Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)

- Given by mouth
- Given through an IV
- Given through a PCA pump

Ketorolac (Toradol)

- Given through an IV
- Given as an injection into the muscle
- Also an anti-inflammatory medication

Morphine

- Given by mouth
- Given through an IV
- Given as an injection into the muscle
- Given through a PCA pump



Other pain treatments include:

EMLA Cream and ELA-Max Cream – Topical Anesthetic

Minimizes pain before procedures involving needle sticks

- Applied to the skin at the site of the injection at least 30 minutes to an hour before a needle stick

Sucrose – sugar and water solution

Given to comfort, calm and minimize pain for distressed babies up to six months of age

- Given by mouth on a pacifier or gloved finger

Versed

Treats anxiety with light sedation causing amnesia-like effects related to the procedure or surgery

- Given by mouth
- Given through an IV
- Given as an injection in the muscle
- Given in the nose

Docusate (Colace) – Laxative and stool softener

One side effect to pain medicine may be constipation. Minimal activity and changes in eating habits also cause constipation.

- Given by mouth



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