

Controlling Your Pain Part 1: Learning About Your Prostate Cancer Pain

The following information is based on the general experiences of many prostate cancer patients. Your experience may be different. If you have any questions about what prostate cancer treatment services are covered by the IMPACT Program, please call your nurse case manager at 1-800-409-8252.

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What Will I Learn By Reading This Booklet?

This booklet will help you learn about controlling your prostate cancer pain.

Controlling the pain you have because of your prostate cancer pain is important.

If you can control your pain, it will not keep you from doing the things that you want to do like working, spending time with family and friends, going to church, or shopping for groceries. In this booklet you will learn about:

- Answers to common questions about controlling your prostate cancer pain
- Why you may have prostate cancer pain
- How to make a pain control plan

It is important for you to think about and plan how you will manage your pain.

The goal of managing your pain is to control it so you can do the things you want and need to do.

Words that appear in **bold** (dark text) can be found in the “Key Words” section at the end of this booklet.

Important Facts You Should Know About Treating Prostate Cancer Pain



Having prostate cancer does not always mean having pain. Some men with prostate cancer don't have any pain. While other men have mild pain. There are many different kinds of medicines and ways to take medicine that can take away your prostate cancer pain. You should not put up with pain as a normal part of having prostate cancer. When you are free of pain, you can sleep and eat better, enjoy the company of family and friends, and continue with your work and hobbies.

Only you know how much pain you have. Telling your doctor and nurse case manager when you have pain is important because:

1. It is easier to treat pain when you first have it. Don't wait until your pain is so bad that you can't do the things you want to do.
2. Constant or new pain can be an early warning sign of the **side effects** (unwanted changes in your body) from your prostate cancer or treatment.

You, your doctor, and your nurse case manager can talk about how to treat your pain. You have a right to pain relief, and you should insist on it.

Common Questions About Taking Pain Medicine

Many men have questions about taking medicine to relieve their prostate cancer pain. You might have the same questions. The following is a list of common questions that are asked and answers to these questions.

Can My Prostate Cancer Pain Be Relieved?

Yes, the pain caused by your prostate cancer can always be relieved. There are many medicines and methods available to control your prostate cancer pain. Your doctor and nurse case manager are here to help you with this. Talk to them about any questions you have.

What Does Pain Control Have To Do With Treatment Of My Prostate Cancer?

Controlling your prostate cancer pain is part of the overall treatment of your prostate cancer. Your doctor wants and needs to hear about what pain control methods work and don't work for you. Knowing about your pain will help your doctor better understand how your prostate cancer and your treatment are affecting your body. Sometimes knowing about the pain will let your doctor talk about other prostate cancer treatments for you. Talking to your doctor about your pain will not distract your doctor from treating your prostate cancer.

What Is The Best Way To Control My Pain?

The best way to control your pain is to stop it from starting or getting worse.

Your pain is best relieved when you treat it early. You may hear some people refer to this as "**staying on top**" of their pain. Do not hold off for as long as possible between taking your pain medicine. If you wait to take your pain medicine:

- Your pain may get worse
- It may take longer for your pain to go away, and
- You may need to take more pain medicine in order to stop your pain.

Is Taking Pain Medicine A Sign Of Weakness?

No. Not everyone feels pain in the same way. There is no need to be "brave" if you have pain because of your prostate cancer. As soon as you have any pain you should speak up. Telling your doctor or nurse case manager about your pain is not a sign of weakness. Remember, it is easier for you to control your pain when it starts rather than waiting until after it becomes severe. When you control your pain, you can sleep and eat better, enjoy the company of family and friends, and continue with your work and hobbies.

If I Take Pain Medication Will I Become Addicted To It?

No. **Addiction** (the uncontrollable need and use of a substance such as a drug or alcohol) is a common fear of many men taking pain medicine for their prostate cancer. Such fear may keep you from taking your pain medicine. Or it may cause family members to encourage you to "hold off" for as long as possible between **doses** (amount of medicine taken at one time) of your pain medicine. If you have severe pain, your doctor may give you an **opioid** (O-pe-oid) to take to relieve your pain. An **opioid** is a medicine like morphine (MOR-feen) used to relieve moderate to severe pain. When you take an opioid to relieve pain, it rarely causes addiction. When you are ready to stop taking opioids, your doctor will slowly lower the amount of medicine you are taking. By the time you stop using the opioids, your body has had time to adjust to not needing them. If you are worried about becoming addicted to your pain medicine, talk to your doctor or nurse case manager.

Will I Get "High" Or Lose Control When I Take My Prostate Cancer Pain Medicines?

If you take your pain medicine as your doctor tells you to, you will not get “high” or lose control. Some pain medicines may cause you to feel sleepy when you first start taking them. This feeling will usually go away after you have taken your pain medicine for two to three days. Sometimes it can take up to a week for this feeling to go away. Sometimes you become sleepy because once your pain is controlled you are able to catch up on the much needed sleep you missed when you were in pain. When your body is rested it is better able to heal. Controlling your pain lets you sleep so your body can heal. There are times when men taking pain medication for their prostate cancer get dizzy or feel confused. If this happens to you, talk to your doctor or nurse case manager. Your doctor may change how much pain medicine you are taking or the kind of medicine you are taking. This will usually take care of the problem of getting dizzy or feeling confused.

It is best not to drive yourself for the first two to three days after starting to take “strong” pain medication. Talk to your doctor about driving while you are taking your pain medicine.

Are There Side Effects From Pain Medicines?

Yes, some pain medicines can cause **side effects** (unwanted changes in your body caused by your prostate cancer treatment) like **constipation, nausea, vomiting, or drowsiness**. Your doctor or nurse can help you manage these side effects. Some side effects such as sleepiness, nausea, and itching usually go away after your body adjusts to the medication. Let your doctor know if these bother you. If the side effects do not get better or go away talk to your doctor or nurse case manager. Many side effects that you have because of your pain medicine can be managed by changing the:

- Kind of pain medicine you take
- Amount of pain medicine you are taking
- Time you take your pain medicine or
- Changing your diet

Will The Pain Medicine I Am Taking For My Prostate Cancer Stop Working If I Take It For A Long Time?

Yes, sometimes this can happen. If your body gets used to the medicine you are taking, your medicine may not relieve the pain as well as it once did.

This is called **tolerance**. If this does happen, speak to your doctor.

Tolerance is hardly ever a problem with cancer pain treatment. The amount of pain medicine you are taking can be changed or other pain medicines can be added to help you. This keeps your body from building a tolerance to the pain medicine.

What Are The Different Types Of Prostate Cancer Pain?

Your prostate cancer pain may be **acute** or **chronic**. Acute pain is severe and lasts for a short time. Acute pain is a message from your body that it is being hurt in some way. The acute pain will usually go away when your injury is healed.

Chronic pain may go from mild to severe and lasts for a long time. If you have chronic pain and are taking medicine to control it, you may also have

breakthrough pain. Breakthrough pain may be moderate to severe. It happens very fast and may last anywhere from minutes to hours. This kind of pain can happen unexpectedly for no clear reason, or it may be set off by an activity, like coughing, moving, or going to the bathroom. Breakthrough pain may happen several times a day. It is a very common kind of pain. It is called breakthrough pain because you feel pain even though you are taking your pain medicine as your were told to by your doctor. Speak with your doctor or nurse case manager if you have any questions about the type of pain you may feel.

What Causes Pain In Men With Prostate Cancer?

Many different things may cause your pain. The pain you are feeling may be from your prostate cancer or from other things such as sore muscles or a headache. If you have pain from your prostate cancer, the amount of pain you have may depend on the **stage** (the amount of a cancer within your body) of your prostate cancer and your **pain threshold** (the amount of pain you can live with). Pain may also be caused by your prostate cancer treatment. Or you may have pain that has nothing to do with your prostate cancer. Like other people, you can get headaches, sore muscles, and other aches and pains.

How Can My Prostate Cancer Pain Be Treated?

Prostate cancer pain is usually treated with pain medicine and with non-medicine treatments like relaxation. For more information about pain medicine and non-medicine treatments, please read the IMPACT Booklets, “Types of Pain Medicines for Your Prostate Cancer” and “Controlling Your Pain Without Medicine.” Speak with your doctor or nurse case manager before you take any medicine for your prostate cancer pain.



How Do I Make A Plan To Control My Prostate Cancer Pain?

Controlling your pain is a team effort. Your team is made up of you, your doctor, your nurse case manager, your

family, and friends. The first step is to make a pain control plan with your doctor.

In order to make a pain control plan that works best for you, you need to be able to explain your pain to your doctor as well as your family or friends. Your family or friends can explain your pain to your doctor if you are too tired or in too much pain.

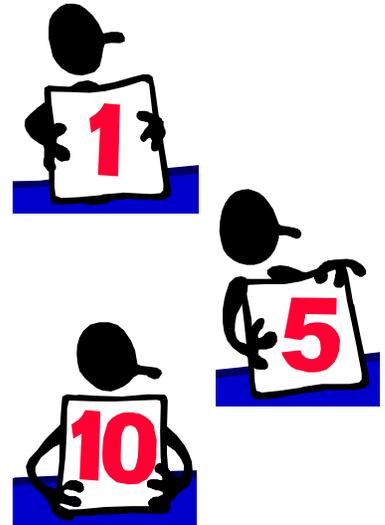


Making A Plan To Control Your Prostate

Cancer Pain

Step 1: Explaining Your Pain

Using a pain scale is helpful in describing how much pain you are feeling. Try to assign a number from 0 to 10 to your pain level. If you have no pain, use a 0. As the numbers get higher, they stand for pain that is getting worse. A 10 means the pain is the worst you can imagine.

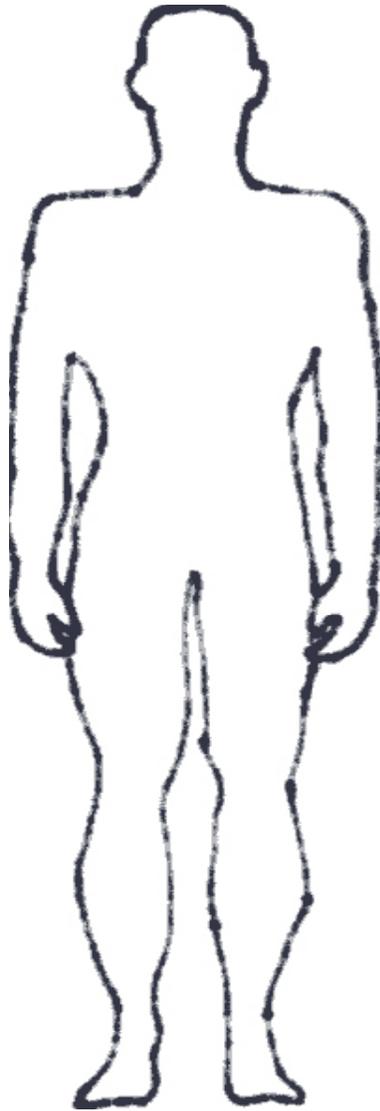


You can use a rating scale to describe:

- How bad your pain is at its worst.
- How bad your pain is most of the time.
- How bad your pain is at its least.
- How your pain changes with treatment.

Step 2: Explaining Where You Feel Pain

Where is the pain located on your body? Mark the areas on the drawing below where you have pain.



You may want to bring this sheet with you to your doctor's appointment. It may help you talk about your pain control plan with your doctor.

Tell your doctor, nurse case manager, and family or friends:

- Where you feel pain.
- What it feels like — sharp, dull, throbbing, steady.
- How strong the pain feels.
- How long it lasts.
- What makes the pain better or worse.
- What medicines you are taking for the pain and how much relief you get from them.

Step 3: Deciding On The Best Pain Medicine For You

In deciding what pain medicines are best for you, your doctor and nurse case manager may also need to know:

- What medicines you are taking now and what pain medicines you have taken in the past, including what has worked and not worked.
- Any known allergies to medicines.





Step 4: Questions To Ask Your Doctor About Pain

Medicine

(You may want to take this sheet with you to your doctor's appointment. It may help you talk about your pain control plan with your doctor.)

- How much medicine should I take? How often should I take my pain medicine?
- If my pain is not relieved, can I take more? If I need to take more, how much should I take?
- Should I call you before taking more?
- What if I forget to take my pain medicine or take my pain medicine too late?
- Should I take my pain medicine with food?
- How much liquid should I drink with the pain medicine?
- How long does it take the pain medicine to start working?
- Is it safe to drink alcohol, drive, or operate machinery after I have taken pain my medicine? What other medicines can I take with my pain medicine?
- What side effects from the pain medicine are possible and how can I keep them from happening?

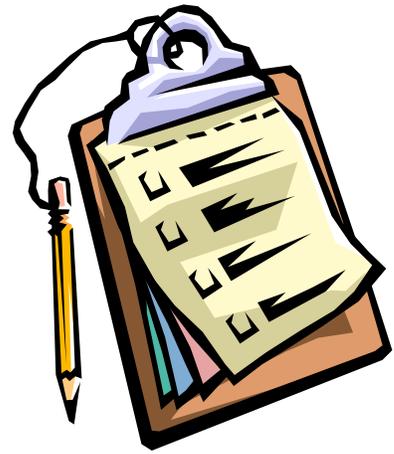


Step 5: Keeping Track Of My Prostate Cancer

Pain

You may find it helpful to keep a record or a diary to track the pain and what works best to lessen your pain.

You can share this record with those caring for you. This will help them figure out what method of pain control works best for you. You may wish to use copies of the "Pain Control Record" found at the end of this booklet to record this information. Your records can include:



- Words to describe your pain.
- Any activity that seems to be affected by the pain or that lowers or raises the amount of your pain.
- Any activity that you cannot do because of your pain.
- The name and the dose of the pain medicine you are taking.
- The times you take pain medicine or use another pain-relief method.
- The number from your rating scale that explains the amount of your pain.
- Your pain rating 1 to 2 hours after you use your pain-relief method.
- How long the pain medicine works.
- How pain keeps you from doing your normal activities, such as sleeping, eating, sexual activity, or working.

- Any pain-relief methods other than medicine you use such as rest, **relaxation, distraction, or imagery.**
- Any side effects you might have from the pain medication, such as constipation, nausea or vomiting.

Step 6: When Your Pain Medicine Is Not Working



If one pain medicine does not work, there is almost always another one that can be tried. Also, if the timing or way that you are taking the pain medicine does not work for you, changes can be made. Talk to your doctor or nurse case manager about finding the pain medicine or method that works best for you. You may need a different pain medicine, a combination of pain medicines or a change in the dose of your pain medicines if:

- Your pain is not relieved.
- Your pain medicine does not start working within the time your doctor said it would.
- Your pain medicine does not work for the length of time your doctor said it would.
- You have breakthrough pain.
- You have side effects that you cannot manage.
- You have serious side effects such as trouble breathing, dizziness, and rashes. Call your doctor right away if these occur.
- The timing or the way you are taking the medicine does not work for you.
- Pain interferes with your normal activities, such as eating, sleeping, working, and sexual activity.



Your Pain Control Team	
Doctor's Name	
Doctor's office phone number	
Phone number where you can reach your doctor in the evening or on weekends.	
Nurse Case Manager's Name	
Nurse Case Manager's phone number	1-800-409-8252

Step 7: Making the Most Of Your Pain Control Plan

Take your pain medicine on a regular schedule (by the clock) to help prevent persistent or chronic pain.

- Do not skip doses of your scheduled medicine. Once you feel the pain, it is harder to control.
- If you experience breakthrough pain, use your short-acting medicine as your doctor suggests. Don't wait for the pain to get worse. The more pain you have the more difficult it is to get the pain under control.
- Be sure only one doctor prescribes your pain medicine. If another doctor changes your medicine, ask the two doctors to discuss your treatment with each other.
- Never take someone else's medicine. Medicines that worked for you in the past or that helped a friend or relative may not be right for you.
- Pain medicines affect different people in different ways. A very small dose may work for you, while someone else may need to take a much larger dose to obtain pain relief.

Remember, your pain control plan can be changed at any time to make it work better for you.

What Have I Learned By Reading This Booklet?

In this booklet, you learned about controlling your prostate cancer pain. You learned:

- Answers to common questions about controlling your prostate cancer pain
- Why you may have prostate cancer pain
- How to make a pain control plan

If you have any questions, please talk to your doctor or nurse case manager. It is important that you know how to manage your pain. This knowledge will help you take better care of yourself and feel more in control so that you are not kept from doing the things that you want to do. Remember you want to control your pain so that it does not control you.

Key Words

Acute pain: Pain that comes on quickly, can be severe, but lasts a relatively short time.

Addiction: the uncontrollable need and use of a substance such as a drug or alcohol.

Breakthrough pain: Intense increases in pain that can happen even if you are taking pain medicine.

Chronic pain: Pain that can range from mild to severe, and remains or get worse over a long period of time.

Constipation: having stool that is hard and difficult to pass.

Distraction: turning your attention to something other than your pain.

Dose: amount of medicine taken at one time.

Drowsiness: when you are very tired and ready to fall asleep.

Imagery: A relaxation method in which the person focuses on positive images in his mind.

Nausea: feeling queasy or sick to your stomach.

Opioid (O-pe-oid): A medicine used to treat moderate to severe pain.

Pain threshold: the amount of pain you can live with.

Prescription: A doctor's order for medicine.

Relaxation: a way to lower your stress and anxiety which helps relieve pain.

Side effects: unwanted changes in your body caused by your prostate cancer treatment.

Stage: the amount of a cancer within your body.

Staying on top: controlling your pain so that it does not start or get worse.

Tolerance: when your body gets used to the medicine you are taking, your medicine may not relieve the pain as well as it once did.

Vomiting: to throw up.