Client and parent role in pain management

Your child’s team is here to help with their pain management. Your child’s pain will be assessed on admission and throughout their stay as their pain level and medication needs may change during their rehabilitation.

How you can help:

- Share with your team how you think your child is doing with their pain management plan.
- You know your child best; there are many reasons why your child may have pain and you can help explain this to the team.
- Know who your team members are – their names and phone numbers are posted beside your child’s bed.

Your team is here for you and will work with your family to transition back to the community.

Notes

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How to help your child cope with pain after surgery

Our goal is to help make your child’s rehabilitation as comfortable as possible.

Many children experience pain after surgery. You are an important part of your child’s pain management team. There are things that you and your child’s team at Holland Bloorview can do to help.

This pamphlet will give you information about how your child’s pain can be managed so that they can take part in their rehabilitation.

Here are some tools to help your child feel more comfortable

Medication, physical methods and coping methods can help manage your child’s pain when used together.

How is pain treated using medications?

- Most children will need medications during their rehabilitation stay.
- The choice of medication and amount given will be matched to your child’s needs.
- Different types of pain medication are often used to help your child. Medications can be scheduled or given as needed.
- A combination of medications may be used.

**Medication for pain may include:**

- acetaminophen (Tylenol®)
- ibuprofen (Advil®)
- narcotics (for example: morphine)
- diazepam (Valium®) for muscle spasms
- gabapentin for nerve pain

**What are some side effects of pain medications?**

- Constipation (difficulty passing stools or hard stools that cause pain and discomfort).
- Drowsiness (more tired or sleepy than usual).
- Your physician or pharmacist can help manage side effects.

**When will my child stop taking pain medications?**

- Most children stop using pain medications before discharge; some may need pain medications at home/school.
- Addiction to medications is rare.
- Pain medications will gradually be reduced during your child’s stay based on their needs.

**Physical methods**

Your child’s physiotherapist (PT) can provide suggestions, which may include:

- **Stretching:** Pictures will be posted beside your child’s bed.
- **Positioning:** Regular position changes will help to prevent development of pressure areas.
- **Heat and cold:** the PT will discuss using hot and cold packs and tell you when it is best to use them. These are available on the unit from your child’s nurse.

**Coping methods**

Child Life Specialists are available to help with your child’s needs and provide suggestions, which may include:

- Breathing for relaxation.
- Music, art and play.
- Mind skills: ask your child to focus on favorite images.
- Education: explain to your child what is happening to their body to cause the pain, using language that they understand.
- Reassure them that if their pain comes back, there are options to help manage it.