

## Managing Common Symptoms of Advanced Illness

### Nausea and Vomiting

Here are some tips you can try to help control nausea.

- Drink clear liquids, if possible.
- Drinking liquids on an empty stomach might make your nausea worse. If this happens, try eating solid food first. Then drink liquids an hour after eating.
- Try eating foods that have a lot of liquid, like popsicles, fruit ice, or Jell-O.
- Dry toast, soda crackers, pretzels, or ice chips may settle your stomach. Try eating them when you wake up and then every few hours.
- Some people find ginger and peppermint help with nausea. You can try tea or hard candy.
- Eat smaller and more frequent meals and snacks. Eat foods that are high in calories and protein.
- Try cold or room temperature foods. Hot foods tend to have strong odors which can cause nausea.
- Eat bland foods. Avoid greasy, spicy and sweet foods. They make nausea worse.
- Avoid strong smells, like perfume.
- If anti-nausea medications are ordered, try them. It may help to take them regularly all day, or 1/2 to 1 hour before meals.
- Call us if you have been vomiting for more than 24 hours.

## **Constipation**

Here are some tips you can try to get rid of constipation.

- Drink plenty of water and liquids, if possible.
- When you feel the need to go to the bathroom, go to the bathroom.
- There are medicines that help make bowel movements easier. Talk to your nurse practitioner for more information.
- Your nurse practitioner may recommend a change in diet, such as eating more foods that have a lot of fiber. This includes items like fruits, vegetables, cereal and prune juice.
- Stay as active as possible.

## **Diarrhea**

Here are some tips you can try to decrease diarrhea.

- Drink plenty of water and liquids, if possible.
- Try to eat a little food. Good choices are rice, noodles, oatmeal, boiled vegetables, or fresh peeled fruit. These may decrease diarrhea.
- There are medicines that can help decrease diarrhea. Talk to your nurse practitioner for more information.

## **Decreased Appetite**

Here are some tips to help you deal with your loss of appetite.

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals and snacks.
- Eat foods that are very high in calories and protein. Ask your nurse practitioner for suggestions.
- Drink a supplemental drink, such as Boost™ or Ensure™.
- Try cold or room temperature foods. These may taste better than hot foods.

## Breathing Difficulty

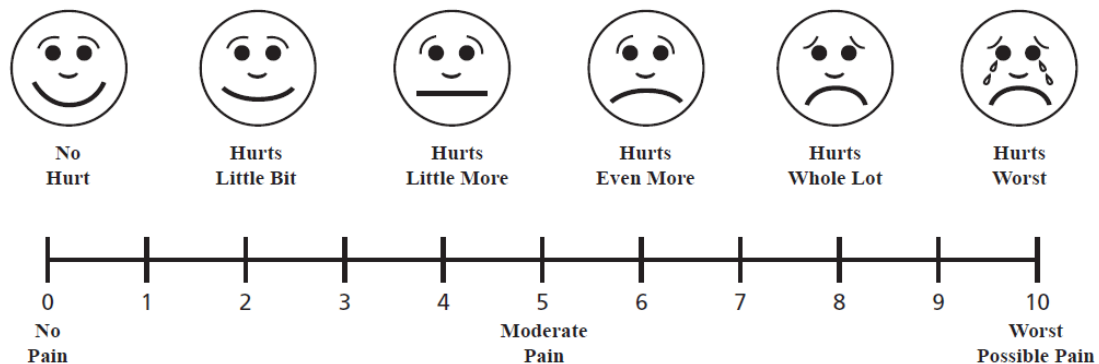
If you are having trouble breathing, tell your nurse practitioner. Here are some tips to help you breathe easier.

- Breathe slowly and calmly.
- Breathe in through your nose and blow out slowly and gently through your lips. Try to breathe out for twice as long as you breathe in.
- Raise the head of the bed or prop yourself up with pillows.
- Open a window or turn on a fan. This increases air circulation.
- Take frequent breaks from any activities. Use a walker, cane, or wheelchair.
- If you use oxygen, make sure it is on and working. Make sure the tubing is not kinked, pinched or pulled apart.
- Try to use a room humidifier or vaporizer to help loosen secretions.
- For caregivers, stay with the person and offer support.
- Take medicine as prescribed.

## Pain

Helping you set a comfort goal is one of the most important things we do. Your nurse practitioner will talk to you about the level of comfort that allows you to continue to enjoy many activities. These six tools will help you describe your pain to us.

1. Tell us your level of pain and your comfort goal. Use a scale of 0 to 10. Zero is no pain and 10 is severe pain. What is your level of pain? What level of pain is your comfort goal?



2. Report your pain. Here are some words that can help you describe the pain you are feeling.

Dull ache	Shooting	Crushing	Pulsing
Squeezing	Sharp	Nagging	Burning
Pressing	Pinching	Cutting	Flickering
Pricking	Cramping	Stabbing	Tingling
Itching	Stinging		

3. Report the location of your pain. Tell us where on your body the pain is located. Tell us if the pain stays in one place or moves in a certain direction or to other areas.
4. Report when pain begins. Do you notice the pain:
- After a certain activity.
  - During certain activities.
  - At certain times of the day.
  - Before your next dose of pain medicine is due.
5. Report how long the pain lasts. Does the pain last until you:
- Sit or lie down.
  - Stop activity.
  - Close your eyes or fall asleep.
  - Take medicine.
6. If pain continues, talk to your nurse practitioner.

Here are some tips to help you deal with your pain.

- Avoid doing the things that make your pain worse.
- Practice relaxing. Try deep breathing or meditation.
- Stay as active as possible.
- Pain and depression often go together and each can make the other worse. Getting treatment for your depression can make it easier to cope with your pain. If you feel depressed, talk to your nurse practitioner.

## Pain Medicine

- Always take your medicine exactly as prescribed (dose, how often, with foods, etc.).
- Use “as needed” doses, if ordered, in between regularly scheduled doses to keep pain controlled before your pain level gets too high.
- Follow all instructions to help with common side effects (ex. constipation, dry mouth, nausea).
- Tell your nurse practitioner if side effects are severe (ex: drowsiness, vomiting, confusion).
- Keep pain medicine out of the reach of children.
- Request refills of your pain medicine on time or before you run out.

## Medicines

It is important for us to know all of the medicines you are taking. This includes vitamins, supplements, herbals and medicine you can buy without a prescription. You should also keep any printed instructions you get from your pharmacy or nurse practitioner when you start a new medicine. We will mail or bring you a copy of your medicine list as part of your After-Visit Summary.

## Other Tips

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