

PAIN IN HOSPICE CARE

Pain is one of the most common symptoms in hospice care. The goal of hospice is to minimize suffering and maximize comfort. Understanding pain and describing it clearly to the Hospice Team can help identify the best treatments.

Important Things to Know

- There are different types of pain, including body pain and nerve pain.
- Describe how the pain feels to the Hospice Team. This helps guide medication choices.
- Pain may have physical, emotional, spiritual, or existential causes.
- The Hospice Team may ask the patient to rate pain on a scale from 1 to 10.

Pain Severity Scale

Pain Level	Description
1–5 / 10	Mild to Moderate Pain
6–8 / 10	Moderate to Severe Pain
9–10 / 10	Severe Pain

Treatments by Pain Severity

- **Mild to Moderate Pain:** Tylenol (Acetaminophen), NSAIDs such as Advil, Ibuprofen, Naprosyn, or Aleve. Lidocaine patches may help localized pain. Some weaker opioid medications may also be used.
- **Moderate to Severe Pain:** Stronger opioids such as Morphine, Oxycodone, Fentanyl patches, or Methadone may be used. Medications like Gabapentin may help nerve pain.
- **Severe Pain:** Contact the Hospice Team for guidance with medication dosing and timing.

Other Ways to Help with Pain

- Anxiety medications such as Lorazepam may help when anxiety worsens pain.
- Relaxation techniques including quiet rooms, soft lighting, music, or meditation may help.
- Discuss whether visitors are comforting or becoming overwhelming.
- Talk openly about emotional or spiritual distress. Hospice social workers and chaplains can help.

Most Important: The best way to understand pain is to ask and listen carefully. Always contact the Hospice Team if pain suddenly worsens or medications do not seem to be helping.