Keeping a pain record or diary

Keeping a record of the pain can help to show a pattern. It helps to include information such as:

- the date and time you have pain
- if it is new pain
- how long it lasts
- where it starts
- if it is in just one area of the body, or more than one
- anything you were doing that has made the pain worse
- anything that helps make the pain better.

It is helpful to also record all the pain medicines and treatments you have tried and how well they worked. It is important to record these, even if your healthcare team did not prescribe or recommend them.

This information can help you talk about the pain with your cancer team. They may give you a pain chart to use. Or you can use our pain diary (pages 22 to 23). It has a diagram of the body so you can mark where you feel pain (page 18). It also gives examples of words you may find helpful when describing your pain.

Keeping a record helps you to track any progress you have made, and what does or does not help.

If you want to use our diary more than once, you can photocopy it.

Pain diary

You can fill in the diary as often as you need to. If the pain is not well controlled, you may want to fill it in every 1 to 2 hours. If the pain is better controlled, you could fill it in every 4 to 6 hours. It may help your cancer team if you fill it in at least 2 times a day. Use the body diagrams and word list to help (pages 18 to 19).

You can record the following in the diary.

When are you in pain?

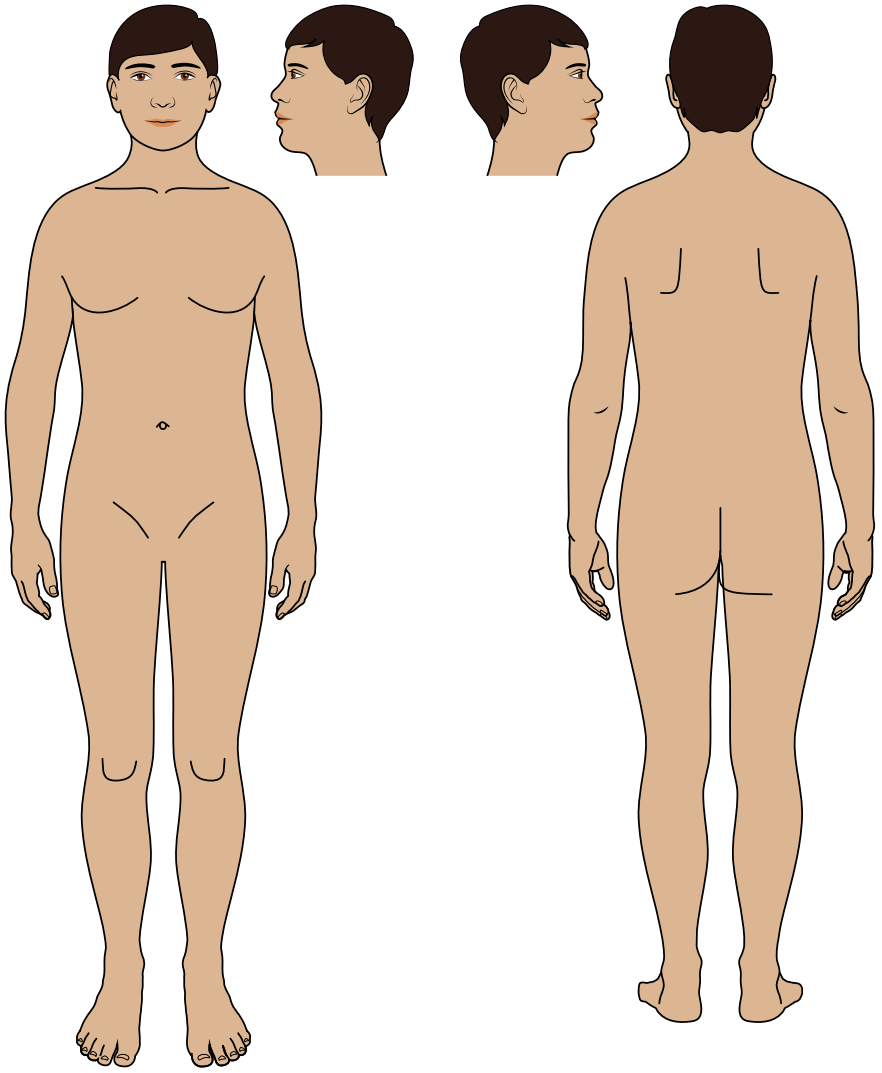
- Are you in pain all the time, or only some of the time?
- Is it better or worse at night?
- Does it keep you awake or wake you up?

Where is the pain?

Is the pain in one part of your body or in more than one place?

You can use the diagram to mark where the pain is (page 18).

If you have more than one area of pain, label them A, B, C and so on. This means that label A on the body is where it is most painful.



What does the pain feel like?

The following words may help when describing the pain:

- aching
- burning
- constant
- crushing
- dragging
- dull
- gnawing
- intense
- nagging
- nauseating
- numb
- prickling
- sharp
- shooting
- sore
- spreading
- stabbing
- stinging
- tender
- throbbing
- tingling
- tiring

How bad is the pain?

There are different ways of describing how bad pain is. Your cancer team may ask you to describe your pain as:

- mild
- moderate
- severe.

There are different scales that can be used to show how bad the pain is. Some people use a number scale. They will ask you to measure your pain on a scale of 0 to 10. 0 means no pain, and 10 means severe pain.

Other people may use pictures of faces to help you describe the pain. This is called a pain faces scale. There is an example of this type of scale at **wongbakerfaces.org**

Be as clear as you can when describing how bad the pain is. This will help your doctors plan the best way to treat it.

Does anything make the pain better or worse?

- Do you feel better or worse when you are standing, sitting or lying down?
- Does a heat pad, hot water bottle or ice pack help?
- How much do the painkillers help?
- How long do the painkillers last?
- Does doing an activity like watching TV reduce the pain?
- Has anything else helped the pain in the past?

How does the pain affect your daily life?

- How does the pain affect what you can do?
- How does the pain affect your sleep and your mood?
- Can you sit long enough to eat a meal?
- Does the pain stop you from concentrating?
- Does it affect your social life or your sex life?

It is important your cancer team understands the problems the pain

Date and time	Where is the pain?	What is the pain like?	Level of pain (0 = none, 10 = severe)	Does the pain stop you doing any daily activities or sleeping?		What medicines or treatments have you used?	What makes the pain better?	What makes the pain worse?