

Pain Management for Elderly

Elderly individuals are at a higher risk of developing chronic pain conditions. However, pain is not an expected consequence of aging.

Some common causes of pain are associated with chronic diseases such as arthritis, bone and nerve damage, joint disorders, or cancer.

If pain is left untreated or undertreated, it may lead to negative consequences such as poor appetite, sleep difficulties, immobility, social isolation, and psychological distress (e.g., depression, anxiety, anger, frustration), creating a cycle of pain and emotional distress.

Therefore, it is important to identify and treat the cause of the pain.



Here are some of the pain relief measures:

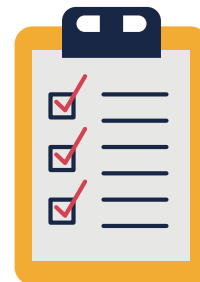
Speak Up:

- Tell your doctor if you are suffering from chronic pain such as joint pain, back pain or headache.



Recognise and report:

- If the patient is cognitively impaired, caregiver needs to assess the pain by:
 - Asking direct questions that only require a yes/no response, such as "Are you in pain?" or "Where is your pain?"
 - Observing non-verbal cues, such as increase agitation, restlessness, change in behaviour, low mood, facial grimacing and social isolation.



Taking painkillers:

- Take the prescribed painkillers timely.
- Take painkiller 30 minutes before activities such as showering, exercise or walking.
- Tell your doctor if there are any side effects of medications, such as nausea, vomiting, giddiness, constipation or confusion.



Gentle reposition:

- Reposition the patient gently and regularly.



Heat or cold pack:

- Heat or cold pack may help with some pain (depending on the cause of the pain) but use with caution as prolonged heat/cold may damage the skin.
- To consult a specialist if needed.



Use of walking aids:

- Tell your doctor if you are suffering from chronic pain such as joint pain, back pain or headache.



Massage therapy:

- Therapeutic massage may relieve pain by relaxing painful muscles, tendons and joints. Massage can also relieve stress and anxiety.
- To consult a specialist if needed.



Essential oils (Aromatherapy):

- There are some essential oils that you can apply topically to ease muscle and joint pain, tension and swelling. Some of these oils can also be used as inhalation for calming effect.
- To consult a specialist if needed.

