

USING A PAIN DIARY

Managing your Pain is Very Important!

- **Pain conditions are harmful to your body.** Research shows that when pain is managed your stress level is reduced and your body can heal faster.
- **Too much pain can make it difficult or impossible for you to do the things you enjoy.** This can make you feel depressed and anxious.

Use a Pain Diary to Gather Important Information about your Pain

- **You are the best expert on the pain you experience.** The more you are able to tell your healthcare providers about your pain, the better they will be able to help you get relief.
- **Your care providers may ask you many questions in order to understand your pain and how to treat it.** It will help a great deal if you can keep a written record of important information about your pain so that you don't have to remember it all on the spot when asked.
- **Keeping a pain diary will make it easy for you to gather information about your pain and communicate it to your care providers.** Writing information about your pain in a diary frees you from having to remember everything when your care providers visit.
- **Using a pain diary can help you and your care providers assess how well the treatment plan is working.** Because everyone is different, you and your care providers will have to work together to find a treatment approach that works best for you. Writing down how well or poorly the treatment is working will help your care providers assess your progress and determine what changes should be made.

Tips for Keeping a Pain Diary

- **Be open and honest about your pain.** Pain hurts! There is nothing to be embarrassed about. The more you can tell your care providers about your pain, the better they will be able to help you manage it.
- **Write as much as you can but a book is not necessary!** The more information you can give, the better. But if you're not feeling up to it, writing just a few important words can give a great deal of information to your care providers.

The WILDA Approach Pain Assessment Guide

Words to describe pain:

(Have patient describe; avoid providing words to patient)

What does your pain feel like? What words would you use to describe your pain?

aching	throbbing	shooting	stabbing
gnawing	sharp	tender	burning
exhausting	penetrating	nagging	pressure
numb	miserable	unbearable	dull
radiating	tingling	crampy	deep

Intensity of the pain (0-10)?

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being no pain and 10 being the worst pain you can imagine... What is your pain now? Has its intensity changed? What has it been in the last 24 hours?

Location of the pain? Where is your pain? Is there more than one site?

Duration of the pain. When did your pain start? How often does it occur? Is the pain always there? Does the pain come and go?
(Breakthrough Pain)

Aggravating/alleviating factors. What makes your pain better? What makes your pain worse?

Additional Areas for Assessment

Vital signs, past medication history, knowledge of pain management, and use of non-pharmacologic pain relief techniques

How does the pain affect physical and social functioning?

sleep energy relationships appetite activity mood

Is patient experiencing pain medication side effects?

constipation sedation itching nausea urinary retention
confusion vomiting dry mouth hallucinations

Permission for the use of the WILDA Approach was given by Regina Fink, RN, PhD, FAAN, AOCN, University of Colorado Hospital, Denver