Will My Cancer or Its Treatment Cause Pain?
Not everyone experiences pain from cancer or cancer treatment. Pain can be caused by the cancer, certain medicines, or by treatments such as radiation or surgery. Pain may also come from conditions not related to cancer or cancer treatment, such as arthritis. Even low levels of pain can make you feel tired, irritable, or cause sleeping problems.

What Should I Do If I Have Pain?
• Take pain medicine as prescribed by your health care provider.
• Allow yourself plenty of rest.
• Find the most comfortable position in which to sit and sleep.
• Try distraction and relaxation techniques.
• Allow your pain medicine time to work before beginning activities.

What Should I Tell My Doctor or Nurse?
A pain scale helps describe how much pain you feel. Your health care provider may ask, “On a scale of 0 to 10, what is your pain level?” For no pain, the number would be 0. For the most extreme pain, the number would be 10.
Your health care provider may ask other questions:
• Where do you feel the pain?
• What kind of pain: sharp, dull, throbbing, or steady?
• How long does the pain last?
• What eases the pain?
• What makes the pain worse?
• What medicines are you taking for the pain?
• How much relief do you get from the medicine?
Be sure to tell your health care team if any side effects occur when you take your pain medicine.

How Is Pain Treated?
We want to treat your pain so you can be as active and comfortable as possible. Your health care provider will find out what is causing the pain and decide which pain medicines are appropriate. You may be referred to the Supportive Oncology and Survivorship Service for help with pain control.

Pain management often follows this process:

**Level 1:** Use routine medicines such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen.

**Level 2:** Add short-acting opioids such as Lortab® or Percocet® as needed.

**Level 3:** If Level 2 medications are needed more than three to four times daily, add long-acting pain medication such as Oxycontin, MS Contin, or Duragesic.

When Should I Call My Doctor or Nurse?
Call if any of the following occur:
• New or more severe pain, especially in the back
• Sudden weakness in the legs
• Pain not controlled by current treatment
• Pain that restricts your activity
• Pain that wakes you at night

Helpful Suggestions
• If you have persistent or chronic pain, take pain medicine on a regular schedule.
• Do not skip scheduled doses of pain medicine.
• Do relaxation exercises such as deep breathing and meditation.
• Keep track of when pain occurs, its severity, and when you take pain medicine.
• Apply A&D® ointment, zinc oxide, or Desitin® to soothe skin irritation.
• Be sure to refill your prescription pain medicines three to five days before they run out.