

## MEDICATION

Take your pain medicine exactly as the package tells you. If you do not understand or are unsure about any of the instructions on the medication, ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain them to you. Check with your healthcare provider to be sure that the pain reliever that you are going to take does not interact with any prescription or "over the counter" medications that you may be taking for other conditions. Never take more than the maximum daily amount of the drug, unless specifically directed by your healthcare provider. Keep records of all your medications. It is important to know the names and dosages of all the prescriptions and "over the counter" medications that you are taking and the reasons you are taking them. To help you remember, keep a written copy of your medication and the dosages with you.

## PREVENTION

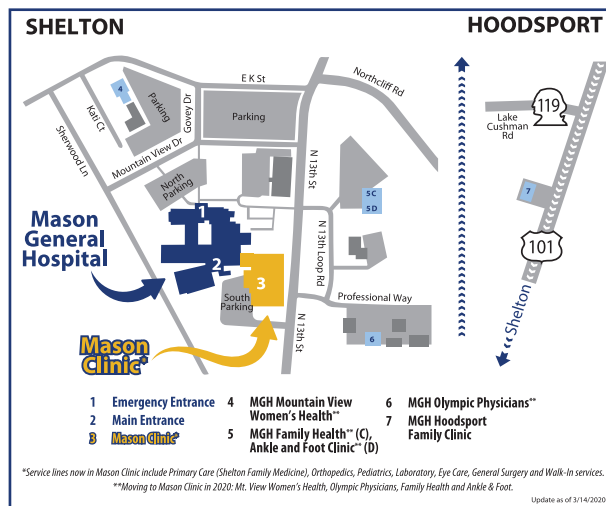
The most important thing you can do for yourself is to try and stay healthy and make every attempt to avoid things that can cause or bring on pain. Some healthy lifestyle choices that can help you manage pain include:

- Exercising regularly to maintain strength, coordination, balance and flexibility.
- Eating a well balanced diet with plenty of fiber.
- Maintaining a healthy body weight reduces the stress to hips and knees.
- Drinking plenty of water
- Getting enough sleep promotes tissue repair
- Standing, sitting and walking with good posture.
- Keeping a positive attitude

**Mission**  
United Community,  
Empowered People,  
Exceptional Health

**Vision**  
Provide the best  
patient-centered care in the  
Pacific Northwest

**Values**  
Service & Relationships



Follow us on social media



**Statement of Purpose:**  
To Improve Pain Assessment  
and Management for All  
Patients

901 Mountain View Drive • PO Box 1668  
Shelton, WA 98584  
360.426.1611  
[www.masongeneral.com](http://www.masongeneral.com)

www.MasonGeneral.com • 901 Mountain View Drive, Shelton, WA 98584 • (360) 426-1611, from Allyn (360) 275-8614, Toll free (855) 880-3201, TTY/TDD (360) 427-9593. Equal Opportunity Provider • Free Translation Services Provided. Se habla español • Mason Health complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, sex or sexual orientation. Certified by Det Norske Veritas.



# PAIN



## WHAT IS PAIN?

Pain is your body's way of responding to injury or illness. Everybody reacts to pain in different ways. What you think is painful may or may not be painful to someone else.

## WHAT CAUSES PAIN?

Pain can be caused by many things such as over exertion, an injury, surgery, or a disease. Some pain is caused by pressure on a nerve, such as a tumor. After an injury or surgery you may not want to move the painful part of your body part. There may also be times when there is no clear reason for your pain.

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PAIN?

Pain may be acute or chronic. ACUTE PAIN is short lived and lasts less than 3 to 6 months. Caregivers work to remove the causes of the pain, such as fixing a broken arm. When there is an acute injury with swelling, usually rest and elevation of the injured area will help decrease the pain. CHRONIC PAIN lasts longer than 6 months. With chronic pain, such as arthritis, gentle stretching is usually helpful.

## WHAT IS YOUR PAIN LIKE?

Caregivers (doctors, nurses, therapists, practitioners) want you to talk about your pain. This helps them learn what could be causing the pain and how to best treat it. Caregivers need you to answer the following questions.

- Where is your pain?
- Does your pain move from one area to another?
- When did the pain start?
- Did your pain start suddenly or increase over time?
- Is the pain steady (constant) or does it come and go (intermittent)?
- How long does it last?
- How would you rate the pain on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the worst pain you could imagine?
- How does the pain feel? Is the pain sharp, cramping, twisting, squeezing or crushing?
- Is the pain stabbing, burning, dull, numb or a pins and needles feeling?
- Does anything cause the pain to start or get worse (i.e., coughing or touching the area)?

- Does anything lessen your pain, make your pain better (i.e., changing positions, resting, medicines, or changing what you eat)?
- Does pain affect your daily life?
- Can you still work in spite of your pain?
- Does the pain come before, during or after meals?
- Do you have chronic pain? If so, how is your chronic pain managed?



## PAIN IN CHILDREN

Because children cannot communicate as adults, we need to learn to read their body language. You may note grimacing, a sad or fearful look or observe agitation like moaning or crying. Check your child carefully and offer comfort measures as prescribed by your doctor. If the pain continues and the cause is unclear, first notify your doctor or primary healthcare provider because they know you and your child the best. If you are unable to contact them, call or go to the nearest Emergency Department for help and/or information.

## CARE/TREATMENT OPTIONS

Most minor day-to-day pain responds well to simple treatments. Your doctor or healthcare provider may recommend short periods of rest and limited activity to start with and then may add medications. Depending on the nature of the pain, your healthcare provider may refer you to a specialist such as a physical or occupational therapist. Physical therapists often use massage, exercise, cold and heat to help relieve pain. You may need to be referred to a pain specialist or follow up with your family doctor or

healthcare provider so the same person/persons can monitor your progress and make changes in your treatment plan as needed.

## PAIN TREATMENT WITHOUT MEDICATION

There are many safe and effective ways to relieve pain without using medication. Many of these pain relief methods can be done at home. Others require the help of a healthcare professional. Remember to talk to your primary healthcare provider about any pain relief techniques you are using or plan to use. Sometimes these techniques are used alone or in combination with medication.

- **Cold Packs:** Cold packs can be applied to the painful area for 15-20 minutes at a time. Always wrap cold packs in a protective layer like a towel. Decrease the application time if you experience discomfort or notice a change in your skin.
- **Heat:** Heat is often effective in providing relief for pain that lasts longer than a day or two. Warm, moist heat packs work well for muscle, joint or back pain. Make sure the heat is only warm and not hot enough to burn the skin. Warmth is the most effective way to increase mobility and relieve stiffness in arthritis joints, but it can increase swelling and fluid in the joint. Alternating heat and cold is ultimately more effective than using ice or heat alone. (Never apply heat to your feet if you have diabetes or circulation problems.)
- **Exercise for Movement:** If done properly, exercise or movement is an excellent way of relieving pain. Physical activity can relieve headaches, prevent low back pain and increase the range of motion of arthritic joints. The activity should be low impact to protect joints from too much wear and tear. Exercise does not need to be long or intense to help relieve pain. The greatest benefit is gained from activity that is done regularly. Most importantly, regular physical activity helps keep your heart and circulatory system healthy. Be sure to check with your primary healthcare provider before starting any program of regular exercise. There are many options that your primary healthcare provider can prescribe or refer for you after an exam.