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Let's talk about pain.

Many people experience pain while they are in the hospital. Pain can be both frightening and disabling. Most of your pain can be controlled by the use of medications and other non-drug treatments, but sometimes it is not possible to completely eliminate pain.

At Barton Memorial Hospital, we're committed to helping you feel better as quickly as possible and dedicated to finding ways to help you be comfortable.

As experts in their field, Barton's **Home Health** and **Hospice** can continue to help patients manage their pain after they are discharged from the hospital. To contact Home Health and Hospice, call: 530.543.5581, South Lake Tahoe and 775.782.1510, Minden.

Your Right to Pain Management



Taking your health to *new heights*

Pain Management

Why control pain?

When your pain is well controlled, you may feel better sooner, get stronger faster and possibly leave the hospital earlier. Controlling your pain will allow you to do what doctors, nurses and therapists may ask you to do each day. These tasks may be as simple as taking deep breaths, rolling over in bed or walking down the hallway.

Tell someone about your pain

Please help your doctors and nurses measure your pain. You will be asked to rate your pain on a scale 0 – 10, where 0 is no pain and 10 is the worst pain imaginable. You may also choose a face on the scale to describe your pain. We will also ask you to set your own comfort goal.

Questions you will be asked

- ❖ Where is your pain located?
- ❖ What does it feel like? (sharp, dull, achiness)
- ❖ How bad does it feel (0-10 scale)
- ❖ What makes you feel better? Or worse?

Don't wait: Take your pain medicine (or ask your nurse for pain medicine) when the pain **starts**, not later. If you wait until the pain is severe, you will need more medicine to relieve it and it will take longer to have any effect.

Scheduling: Take pain medicine when it is due and as prescribed. During the day and night set an alarm to keep on schedule.

Think ahead: If you know your pain will worsen when you start an activity (walking, doing breathing exercises, or turning in bed), take the pain medicine first to prevent severe pain. It's easier to prevent pain than to treat it once it has taken hold.

Possible side effects of pain medicines

- ❖ Dry mouth
- ❖ Itchiness
- ❖ Difficulty urinating
- ❖ Drowsiness
- ❖ Dizziness
- ❖ Nausea & vomiting

Always take your pain medicine with food to prevent nausea.

- ❖ Constipation: People who take pain medicines for more than a few days will almost always have constipation. Unless restricted, increase fluids and fiber. You may need an over the counter laxative or stool softener.

Please let your doctor or nurse know if you have ANY of these side effects.

DO NOT drink alcohol, drive a vehicle or operate machinery while you are taking pain medicine.

Tylenol/Acetaminophen

If your doctor advises you to take medicines with acetaminophen (Tylenol), be aware of the following information. The maximum amount of acetaminophen you take over a 24 hr period should be no more than 4,000 mg. More than that amount can damage your liver and kidneys. One regular Tylenol tablet has 325mg of acetaminophen.

❖ **Caution:**

Check for this "hidden" acetaminophen in many over-the-counter cold medications and in prescribed pain medications such as Percocet & Vicodin. Do not drink alcohol if you are taking acetaminophen; doing so can cause liver damage.

Wong-Baker FACES Pain Rating Scale®



Pain control: What are the options?

Both drug & non-drug treatments can help to control pain. You, your doctor and your nurse will decide which ones are right for you.

Non-drug examples: Ice, heat, elevation, distraction, positioning, relaxation

Slow rhythmic breathing for relaxation:

Try this exercise after periods of activity or during medical procedures to help reduce anxiety & pain.

1. Breathe in **slowly** & deeply.
2. As you breathe out **slowly**, feel yourself beginning to relax; feel the tension leaving your body.
3. Now breathe in & out **slowly** & regularly, at whatever rate is comfortable to you.
4. To help you focus on your breathing & to breathe slowly & rhythmically: (a) breathe in as you say silently to yourself "in, two, three;" (b) breathe out as you say silently to yourself, "out, two, three." Each time you breathe out, you could also say silently to yourself a word such as "peace" or "relax."
5. Do steps 1-4 only once OR repeat steps 3-4 for up to 20 minutes.

What about addiction?

Sometimes people are worried that taking pain medicine will make them addicted. Pain medications are made to treat pain just as antibiotics are made to treat infections. If a person has pain and needs medication to control it, he or she is not an addict. Addiction to pain medication occurs when a person takes the medication for reasons other than pain such as to "get high". Addiction rarely occurs in people who take pain medication for pain control.