



Pain Care Bill of Rights

As a person with pain, you have a right to:

- Have your report of pain taken seriously and be treated with dignity and respect by doctors, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, physician assistants and other healthcare professionals.
- Have your pain thoroughly assessed and promptly treated.
- Participate actively in decisions about how to manage your pain.
- Be informed and know your options; talk with your healthcare provider about your pain – possible cause(s), treatment options and the benefits, risks and cost of each choice.
- Have your pain reassessed regularly and your treatment adjusted if your pain has not been eased.
- Be referred to a pain specialist if your pain persists.
- Get clear and prompt answers to your questions, take time to make decisions, and refuse a particular type of treatment if you choose.



American Pain Foundation

A United Voice of Hope and Power over Pain

Although not always required by law, these are the rights you should expect for your pain care.

Helpful Hints on Your Road to Pain Relief

Managing your pain is an important step to reclaim your life. The earlier you seek treatment, the better.

Here are some other helpful tips:

- Only you know the extent of your pain and how it affects your quality of life. Don't be afraid to speak up!
- Remember, there are a variety of drug and non-drug therapies (e.g., physical therapy, yoga, meditation) available to effectively control pain; these are typically used in combination.
- Knowledge is power. Many people living with pain and even some healthcare providers believe that opioid medications are addictive. The truth is that when properly prescribed by a healthcare professional and taken as directed, these medications give relief — not a “high.”
- Tell your provider what over-the-counter medications, vitamins and supplements you take, at what dose and how often. Also let him or her know about other personal health habits (e.g., smoking tobacco, alcohol use), which can interfere with some pain treatments and increase pain levels.
- Keep a pain journal to record the frequency and intensity of your pain. Use descriptive words, such as sharp, crushing, throbbing, shooting or tender. Also, take note of how well your treatment plan is working and what makes your pain worse or better.
- Write down questions you have before each appointment. Bring a relative or friend with you for support and to help take notes and remember what was said.
- Research available support groups and educational programs.

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