

## **BARRIERS to PAIN MANAGEMENT**

**Do you have these thoughts when you are considering pain medication?  
Do these ideas help you see the problem differently?**

1. *I don't want to get addicted*
  - Addiction does not equal need (if you need a medication it doesn't mean you are addicted, even if you need it long term.
  - Addiction drives you to attain it at all costs.
2. *I may get constipated*
  - You probably do need a stimulant laxative or stool softener, or just the right diet. If you are already constipated the stool softener and diet may not be enough to get you going again. But you can manage constipation and pain meds.
3. *They make me drowsy or nauseated*
  - These are possible side effects. In fact driving with strong pain medications is correlated with a higher accident rate. Usually the drowsiness goes away in a few days. Try pain medication for a short term to see if you can get the pain under control. Tell your doctor.
4. *Strong people don't need pain medication, pain builds character.*
  - If pain interferes your life (you are grumpy, not sleeping, not moving, lack energy, can't concentration, choose not to do things) then you hurt enough to get help. Consider the toll on your caregiver.
5. *Pain may indicate that an illness has gotten worse*
  - Watch for trends: you may be able to find out what aggravates your pain. Some pain should be reported right away, see below.
6. *Pain medication should be "saved" in case the pain gets worse*
  - Avoid letting your pain spike, its harder to control it once it is too high. Keep it at an even level and you can observe what helps and hinders it. Keep your activities at an even level, too, so you don't need extra medication. If an activity will make you hurt, try to do it a different way: more breaks, slower pace, less movement, with help, with adaptations. You can always change back if the pain goes down.
7. *There is nothing else to help with pain.*
  - Many techniques have been used over the ages to help you minimize your pain. They have been summarized here as the 7 Ms:
    - MMMMMMM-Many ways to manage your pain -**
    - Medication: Ask how each effects pain differently
    - Benefit is that if you don't hurt you heal faster and can move more.
    - Take it before you hurt too much. Keep the pain even.

Modalities: Heat / cold / Contrast / ultra sound / TENS

Movement awareness: Posture and position; learn that movement doesn't have to hurt. Adapt speed, range, frequency, weight. Balance rest / gentleness and movement (usually motion is lotion)

Manual Therapy: Massage, mobilization, myofascial and craniosacral therapy

Mind Therapy: Guided imagery, Humor, Family dynamics and behavioral coping

Meditation: Breathing, redirect attention, develop a sense of calm, connect with something bigger than oneself.

Massage / relaxation / acupuncture

Note: These ideas are not meant to take the place of medical advice. They may not relate directly to your condition. They are provided to help you understand pain and communicate about it. Please seek medical help as needed.

Please call Therapy In Your Home – OT, PT, ST if you have questions about any of the above ideas. 408-358-0201