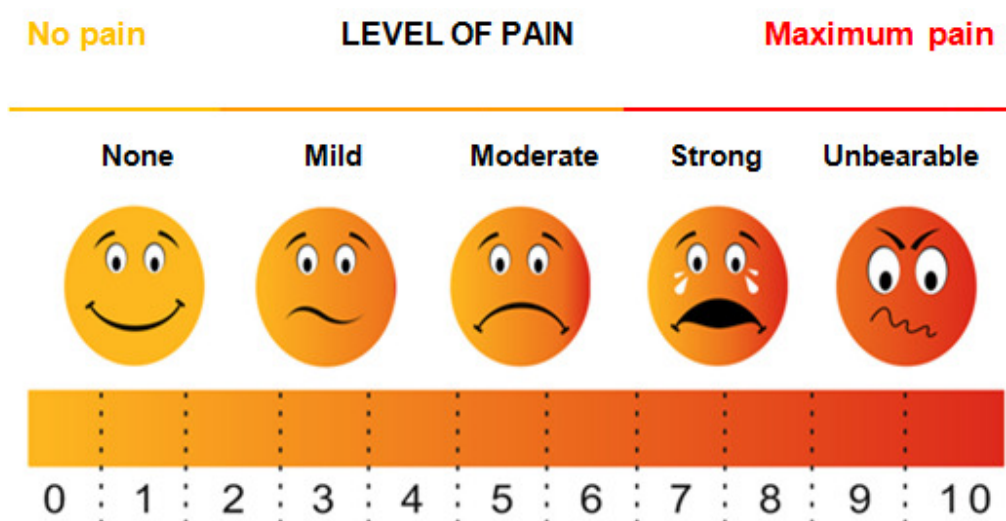


MANAGING PAIN AFTER SURGERY

Pain Rating Scale

Nurses and doctors will help you describe and assess your pain.

You will be asked to rate your pain on a scale from 0 to 10 or to describe it as "none", "mild", "moderate", "strong", or "unbearable".



Is it important for nurses and doctors to keep asking you if you are experiencing pain?

Yes. Absolutely. The intensity of pain may vary throughout the day and painkillers may not always have the desired effect.

Why is pain management important?

Pain relief is extremely important for you to:

- better cope with your post-op and recovery
- perform your respiratory and physical therapy exercises more easily
- walk more quickly, speed up your recovery, and avoid some complications.

Methods to manage your pain

There are several ways to manage and relieve your pain, from medications to analgesia (e.g. patient-controlled or epidural).

- For moderate surgeries, painkillers are administered at scheduled times, by mouth or intravenously.
- For major surgeries involving a more intense post-op pain, various methods may be combined and will be explained to you by the anesthesiologist.

Always tell doctors or nurses if the drug you are receiving is having no effect, or if it is causing an allergic reaction. Remember that even if you're experiencing side effects, like nausea and vomit, it is always possible to identify the right medication.

Post-operative pain

After a minor surgical intervention, your post-op recovery will continue at home. Here are a few recommendations:

- remember to follow the instructions you received at the hospital
- inform your family doctor about your pain management treatment
- relax and surround yourself with your family and friends

After a major surgery, pain relief methods (all equally effective) may include medications administered intravenously or through a small catheter positioned in the epidural space (spinal column). The policies enforced at ISMETT are the result of a collaboration between anesthesiologists, surgeons, and pharmacists, and comply with the international guidelines.

Therapeutic options

Intravenous pain treatment

This method consists in administering continuous pain medication directly in the bloodstream to make their effect last longer. Various systems can be used such as individual drips, infusion pumps, or single IV bolus.

Epidural pain treatment

Epidural analgesia involves an electronic infusion pump administering drugs in the epidural space, or directly near the nerves that transmit the pain caused by surgery. Medications are injected through an epidural catheter inserted in the spinal column, not far from the spinal cord, during a procedure performed by an anesthesiologist under local anesthesia. The electronic infusion pump is a small portable device that doses pain medications continuously. This allows to better control pain after surgery, improving recovery, and preventing post-op complications.

Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

This method uses a pump that allows you to regulate the amount of painkillers you require. By pressing a button as soon as you start feeling the pain you'll receive the right amount of painkillers before the pain becomes too strong. Don't be afraid to use it: your pump is set by the nurse for the amounts and times ordered by the doctors.

At ISMETT we know that post-op pain is unpleasant and that it is pointless to continue suffering. Pain control is important for different reasons, both clinical and psychological. In this leaflet we describe the main methods used to manage post-op pain, and how to assess pain according to international guidelines.

Talk to your doctors and nurses about your pain. Don't be ashamed and don't be afraid to disturb them. We know that the pain you are experiencing is real. Do not hesitate to call a care provider who will help you feel better. Pain medications are not addictive if administered by specialized physicians.

Our team will recommend the most effective treatment for you.

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