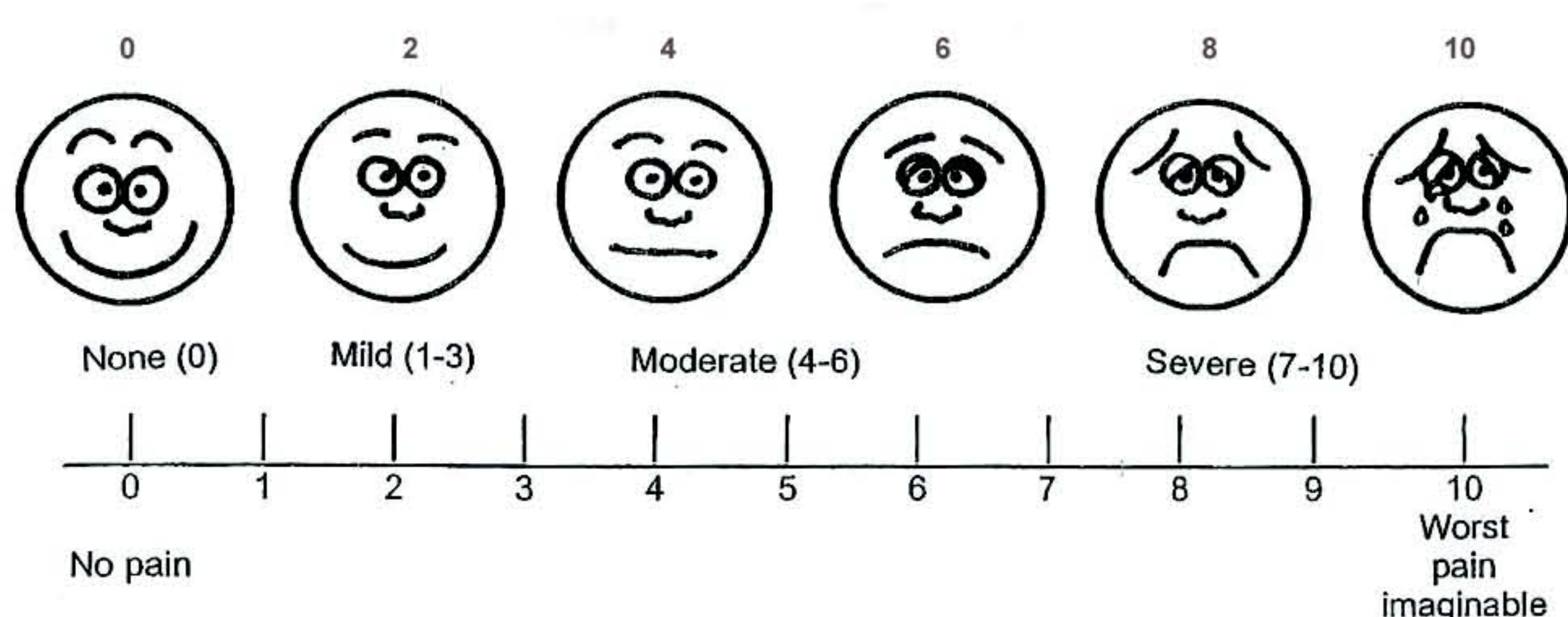


Your health care provider will ask you to rate your pain on a scale of “0 to 10” or you may choose a “face” on a scale which best describes your pain.

Reporting your pain as a number helps the health care provider know how well your treatment is working and whether to make any changes.

This is an example of the pain scale you may use:

PAIN ASSESSMENT TOOL



- Don't worry about being a “bother.”
- Pain can be a sign of problems.
- Your health care provider wants and needs to know about your pain.
- Don't assume you need less pain medicine because your pain is under control.



What can you do to help keep your pain under control?

Being prepared helps put you in control. You may want to write down your questions before you meet with your health care provider:

Be sure to:

- Talk with your health care provider about pain control methods that have worked well or not so well for you before.
- Talk with your health care provider about any concerns you may have about pain medicine.
- Tell your health care provider about any allergies to medicines.
- Ask you health care provider—will there be much pain, where will it occur and how long will it last?
- Take your pain medicine or ask the nurse for pain medicine when the pain starts. This is a key step in proper pain control.
- Take pain medicine before getting out of bed, walking, or doing breathing exercises. These activities can increase your pain. It is harder to ease pain once it has taken hold.
- Remember to ask for assistance when getting out of bed or walking if you have taken pain medicine.

A Patient/Family Guide



Let's Talk About Pain Control

Don't put up with the pain

People used to think that severe pain was something they “just had to put up with.” But with current treatments, that’s no longer true. Today you can work with your health care provider to help prevent or relieve pain. It is your pain, don’t minimize it.

Why control pain?

When your pain is controlled, you can:

- Heal faster.
- Start walking and doing your breathing exercises so you can get your strength back faster.
- Feel better sooner.
- Improve your results. People whose pain is well controlled seem to do better. They may avoid some problems (such as pneumonia and blood clots) that affect others.

Pain Control: *What are the options?*

Medicine or non-drug methods can be helpful in preventing or controlling pain. You and your health care provider will decide which ones are right for you. Many people combine two or more methods to get greater relief.

Don't worry about getting “hooked” on pain medicine. Studies show that this is very rare — unless you already have a problem with drug abuse.

Pain Control Methods

Medicine

Several routes can be used to administer pain medicine which include:

- **Oral** - Oral pain medicine is taken by mouth in pill or liquid form or placed under the tongue.

Oral pain medicine seems to give better results when given at set times. Instead of waiting until you have pain, you receive medicine at set times during the day to keep the pain under control.

- **Skin** - Skin patches containing pain medicine are applied to the skin and used for long term management of pain.
- **PCA Pump (Patient Controlled Analgesia)** - Patient controlled analgesia allows you to control when you get pain medicine. When you begin to feel pain, you press a button to inject the pain medicine through the intravenous (IV) tube in your vein.
- **Epidural** - An epidural is a tiny tube placed in your back by the anesthesiologist. The tube is connected to a pump which delivers pain medicine.

Other pain control methods

There are many non-drug methods for pain control such as massage, heat, cold, splinting of an incision, relaxation, music or other pastimes that distract you, meditation and positive thinking. Other methods are also available, so ask your health care provider.

How to communicate your pain

We will do everything we can to reduce your pain. You can help by asking your health care provider what you may expect.

There is a Pain Service who will assist your doctor to treat your pain. If you are interested in this special pain service, please ask your doctor.

