PAIN: NOT A PART OF DAILY LIFE
FAMILY PHYSICIANS CAN HELP CURE CHRONIC OR ACUTE PAIN

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—At this moment, approximately 65 million people are suffering from some variety of pain.

You may feel sharp, dull or throbbing pain. It may come on gradually or be constant.

Regardless of the kind of pain that you feel, it is important to understand the causes of pain and the many steps that can be taken to undo the damage that chronic pain has caused. No patient should have to “learn to live with the pain.”

Pain is unique to each individual and may be acute or chronic. Acute pain is severe but lasts a short time, such as during childbirth or passing a kidney stone. Chronic pain may range from mild to severe and typically persists for more than six months.

The relationship with your family physician is very important when dealing with pain. The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians (OAFP) recommends a “team approach” when managing pain. This means visiting your doctor when you feel pain and discussing the ways to prevent or relieve your discomfort. Do not wait for pain to get worse or unbearable.

Medication is not the only pain relief option. In addition to medication, treatment for pain can include: counseling, physical therapy, diet modification, exercise and many other non-drug treatment options. Surgery is often considered the last resort.

If standard over-the-counter medications are not relieving your discomfort, visit your family physician to discuss other appropriate methods to alleviate your pain. Your quality of life will improve, and you once again can enjoy daily activities and feel happier.

The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians is a statewide professional association with more than 4,400 members, including practicing physicians, family medicine residents and medical students. The scope of family medicine encompasses all ages, both sexes and every disease entity. Family physicians provide comprehensive, continuing care to all members of the family.
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Common Complaints
- Headache
- Lower-back pain
- Cancer pain
- Arthritis pain
- Neurogenic pain (damage to the peripheral nerves or to the central nervous system)
- Psychogenic pain (some cases of pain are not due to past disease or injury nor is there any detectable sign of damage to the nervous system)

How to Explain Your Pain
When you feel pain, you need to be able to explain how you are feeling so that your family physician can better understand your situation.
- Where do you feel your pain?
- When did you start feeling pain?
- What does it feel like? Sharp? Constant? Throbbing?
- What daily activities does it prevent you from doing?
- What makes it feel better?
- What have you tried to relieve the pain?
- What makes it feel worse?
- What have you tried that does not help?
- How often and how long does your pain last?

How to Rate Your Pain
Explaining the intensity of your pain will help your doctor decide how to treat it. You can rate your pain on a scale of zero to five—zero meaning no pain to five meaning the worst pain. Use the rating scale to answer:
- How bad is your pain at its worst? At its least?
- How bad is your pain the majority of the time?
- How does your pain change with treatment? (such as medication)

How to Record your Pain
It is very helpful to keep a diary of your pain. A diary can be a great source for you and your doctor to see developing patterns, define your pain periods and document the methods used to control your pain. Items to include in your diary:
- Time of day you take pain medicine and how long it works.
- Document the name of the medicine and the exact dosage.
- List daily activities or routines that are affected by your pain, whether increasing or decreasing your pain.
- List any pain relief methods you use other than medicine, such as napping, relaxation, breathing techniques, exercise, etc.