

This brochure supports addiction recovery management and can improve patient-doctor communications.

Let go of concerns

“I am worried if I complain about pain, others will not believe me.”

“It’s better to deny pain or live with it rather than find out I have something seriously wrong.”

“If I take prescription pain medications, I will be using again.”

“If I take prescription pain medications, everyone will think I relapsed.”

“I can’t tell my doctor about my substance use history because I am afraid he/she won’t understand or will think I am seeking drugs rather than seeking pain relief.”



New York State Office of Alcoholism
and Substance Abuse Services
1450 Western Avenue • Albany, NY 12203
www.oasas.state.ny.us

General information: 518.473.3460



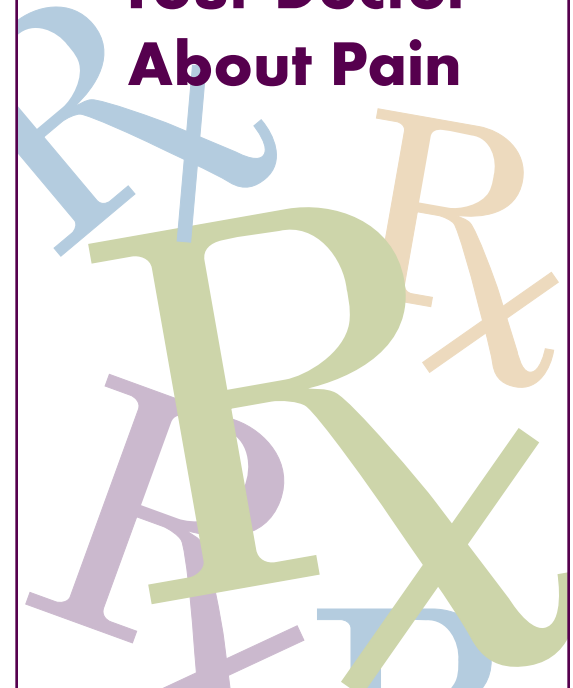
1-877-8-HOPENY
Find Help for 1-877-846-7369
Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Problem Gambling

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez, M.S., L.M.S.W.



For People in Recovery from Addiction

Talking to Your Doctor About Pain



Be a **partner** in your
health care.

Talking Helps

Talking with your doctor is necessary to learn how to best control your pain and prevent relapse. An open discussion about how your recovery is going can also help determine the best pain management plan and lay the foundation for a solid patient-doctor relationship.

You have the right to expect that your doctor will be sensitive, nonjudgmental, supportive and knowledgeable about the implications of addiction as it relates to your pain management plan.

Before You Visit With Your Doctor

Start a **Pain Journal** and record the location, frequency and intensity of your pain throughout the day and night. Also, describe the affect your pain has on your sleep patterns and daily activities.

The location of pain is important. In the diagram on the attached pain journal, indicate the exact area(s) of pain.

Write down what makes the pain better or worse, for example over-the-counter medications, rest, ice, heat, lying down, standing or other activities.

Bring a list of all the medications you are taking, including vitamins and supplements, and over-the-counter medications.

Ask a friend, family member, sponsor or your recovery coach to go with you. A support person can take notes, help you remember and help you monitor use of pain medications.

At the Doctor's Office

- Inform the doctor of past experiences that may have put you at risk for certain illnesses. Tell him/her if this pain has occurred before.
- Let your doctor know you are concerned about taking certain medications that may cause cravings, cloud your judgment and put you at risk for relapse. Tell him/her about all past substance use, including opiates or steroids.
- Be honest about any personal health habits (e.g., smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol and/or other substance use) because they can interfere with some pain treatments and increase pain levels.
- Ask about non-opioid medications, referrals for physical therapy or complementary treatments that are available to effectively control pain (i.e. acupuncture, massage, meditation, therapeutic touch, etc.).
- Ask about resources that contain pain management information (i.e. booklets, websites or support groups).
- Review other health problems you have, such as allergies, arthritis, breathing problems and heart conditions, as these may keep you from doing some types of therapy.

Examples of how to express your needs during the visit with your doctor

You want to know about pain management options: *Besides taking medication, what else can be done to manage my pain? What are the benefits and risks of each treatment option? What are the possible side effects?*

You are having difficulty understanding: *I am not clear about what you want me to do when I leave here. Can we go over it again?*

You need additional emotional support to help relieve anxiety, anger or depression which makes your pain feel worse: *I think I need more support. Can you recommend a qualified counselor to help me?*

You want to know when you can expect to feel relief and what to do if you don't (this question can help avoid an emergency room visit): *How soon should I expect to feel some pain relief? What should I do if there is no change or if the pain gets worse?*



After the Visit With Your Doctor

- Review the visit. Read the notes that you or your friend took during the visit.
- Continue a personal pain management journal. Include what works and/or what does not work for pain relief, as well as what makes it worse.
- If you are concerned about misusing your medications ask a friend, recovery coach or family member to help monitor your pain management.
- Try relaxation strategies to help decrease pain. Simple relaxation methods can be learned from books, CDs, audiotapes or classes that teach relaxation techniques.
- Keep your doctor informed. As pain lessens or worsens, he/she will adjust medications as needed.
- If pain has not been eased or gets worse, **do not ignore it.** Notify your doctor for a pain reassessment and treatment adjustment. Do not take more medication than the prescribed dose. Do not add other medications, and do not "borrow" medication from others.
- If you are concerned about your results and the options the doctor has given you, find out more before making a decision. Ask for a second opinion if it makes you feel more comfortable.
- If you feel that you and your doctor do not have a good relationship, you have the right to change doctors if you wish. People have different needs and a doctor who is your health care partner will respect your decision.

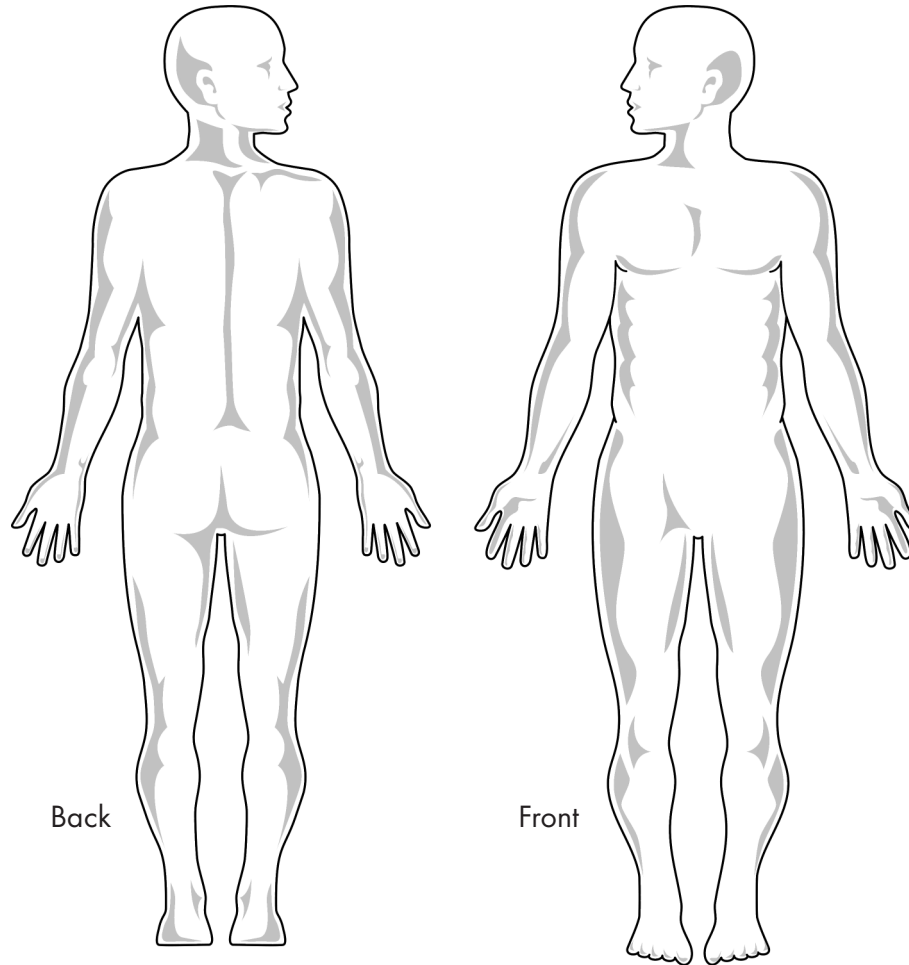
Pain Journal

Start a **Pain Journal** and record the location, frequency and intensity of your pain throughout the day and night for the past three days. Describe the affect your pain has on your sleep patterns and daily activities.

Name _____

Date _____

The location of pain is important, demonstrate the exact area(s) of pain on these pictures



Back

Front

Keep track of your pain and estimate the intensity – from 0 to 10 – for the past three days.

No Pain **0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10** Most Severe Pain

Starting Date	Descriptive words and intensity @ 8 a.m.	Descriptive words and intensity @ noon	Descriptive words and intensity @ 4 p.m.	Descriptive words and intensity @ midnight	Medications times, dosages and effectiveness	How did pain interfere with sleep and daily activities?