

Using Pediatric Pain Scales Neonatal Infant Pain Scale (NIPS)

At UW Health, we care about your child's comfort. You are an important member of your child's healthcare team. You know your child best. We want to partner with you to help control your child's pain. If you have questions or concerns, please speak up and let your child's nurse know. While we may not be able to make your child pain free, this is what we can do.

- Assess your child's pain. This is the first step to understand and treat pain.
 - We use pain scales based on the child's age, ability to communicate and preference. We work with you and your child to decide which one works best. The pain scale you choose is used the whole time your child is in the hospital, unless your child's condition changes.
- Work with you and your child to come up with a goal for pain control.
- Learn what has worked before to control your child's pain and put that information in your child's plan of care.
- Use medicine and non-drug methods to control your child's pain.
- Teach you about other methods you can use to control your child's pain.

Often a combination of medicine and comfort methods will give the best pain relief.

If you think medicine is needed, please let your child's nurse know. In the hospital a doctor must order pain medicine before a nurse can give it to a patient. Your child's nurse works with you to decide what is

needed. In clinic your child's doctor or nurse talks with you about the pain medicine plan. You can start using some simple methods if your child seems uncomfortable or in pain. These methods are often able to provide comfort and distraction that may decrease your child's pain. At the hospital we have options to provide pain control without medicine. The nurse, nursing assistant or child life therapist can work with you to choose the best tools for your child. They can give you tips about how to use the tools that are chosen. We also have another Health Fact for You titled **Non-drug Pain Control for Kids** that gives tips based on your child's age. These methods can be used with or without medicine. Pain control research teaches us that the best pain control happens when we combine medicines that work in different ways, and non-drug methods of pain control. We suggest you try these non-drug methods with your child when you feel they may be helpful.

Neonatal Infant Pain Scale (NIPS)

At the American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) the NIPS is used in children less than one year of age. Children at this age are not able to tell us if they are in pain. This scale uses body language to help us to understand if a child is in pain. A child is evaluated and either scored a 0 or 1 in each category based on their behavior. A total score is calculated. Most of the time a score greater than 3 tells us a child is likely to be experiencing pain or discomfort. If you notice this, you could try some of the comfort methods listed below.

- Repositioning
- Singing or soft music
- Gentle stroking

- Rocking with the child in a rocking chair
- Swaddling
- Pacifier
- Holding a comfort item or blanket

Neonatal/Infant Pain Scale (NIPS)

(Recommended for children less than 1 year old) A score greater than 3 indicates pain.

Pain Assessment		Score
Facial Expression		
0 - Relaxed Muscles	Restful face, neutral expression	
1 - Grimace	Tight facial muscles; furrowed brow, chin, jaw (negative facial expression – nose, mouth brow)	
Cry		
0 - No cry	Quiet, not crying	
1 - Whimper	Mild moaning, intermittent	
2 - Vigorous cry	Loud scream; rising, shrill, continuous (Note: Silent cry may be scored if baby is intubated as evidenced by obvious mouth and facial movement)	
Breathing Pattern		
0 - Relaxed	Usual pattern for this infant	
1- Change in breathing	Indrawing, irregular, faster than usual; gagging, breath holding	
Arms		
0 - Relaxed/Restrained	No Muscular rigidity; occasional random movements of arms	
1 - Flexed/Extended	Tense, straight arms; rigid and/or rapid extension, flexion	
Legs		
0 - Relaxed/Restrained	No Muscular rigidity; occasional random movements of legs	
1 - Flexed/Extended	Tense, straight legs; rigid and/or rapid extension, flexion	
State of Arousal		
0 - Sleeping/Awake	Quiet, peaceful, sleeping or alert, random leg movements	
1 - Fussy	Alert, restless and thrashing	

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 11/2017 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7711