

Using Pediatric Pain Scales Faces Pain Scale

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 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.

Faces Pain Scale Revised (FPS-R)



We know these faces may look odd and even scary to you. We offer you the option to use this pain scale because it has been studied and used in many cultures and is found to work well.

We use this scale by telling children "These faces show how much something can hurt. This face *[point to left-most face]* shows no pain. The faces show more and more pain *[point to each from left to right]* up to this one *[point to right-most face]* - it shows very much pain. Point to the face that shows how much you hurt *[right now]*." It is important not to include a number with talking about these faces as that can cause confusion. These faces are used with children who do not yet understand what the number would represent. If they can use a number scale appropriately, that is the scale they should be using. Typically this scale is used with children ages 4-8 years old. It can

be used in older children if the number scale does not adequately describe their pain or they have difficulty choosing a number to represent the amount of pain they are experiencing.

If you think your child is in pain, you could help by using some of the non-drug methods of pain control listed below.

- Repositioning
- Singing or soft music
- Gentle stroking
- Rocking with your child in a rocking chair
- Watching a movie
- Reading a book
- Heat or cold
- Other methods you use at home to comfort your child

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#7713