

# PAIN

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## ■ Important information for you

Your cancer may bring with it pain due to inflammation, compression or infiltration of certain organs. Sometimes your treatment and the procedures involved may themselves be painful (blood tests, taps/punctures/drains, or the insertion of a catheter). In every case the pain must be addressed. It affects all aspects of your life and may delay your recovery. Report all pain, so that your treatment can be adjusted and made as effective as possible.

Different means of pain relief are available: medication, physiotherapy, blocking the nerve that transmits the pain, relaxation, hypnosis etc. In certain indications, chemotherapy or radiotherapy themselves reduce pain.

Many medications are effective in lessening pain (paracetamol, anti-inflammatories, opiates). The choice of treatment depends in particular on the causes of the pain, its intensity and its characteristics, as well as your past experience.

You are the expert where your symptoms are concerned. Only you can describe your pain, which is why it is really important to speak to your medical team about it. You are essentially partners, working together to mobilize your personal resources and to explore your fears about the repercussions of the pain. We can also better pinpoint what makes the pain persist or worsen: your emotional state, your social or financial worries, your anxiety about your future etc.



## HELP AVAILABLE

When the pain resists the usual treatments, a team specializing in pain consultation will examine with you the best therapeutic solution. They will intervene at the request of your doctor. Don't hesitate to ask for them.



## INFO

Pain that has become entrenched is harder to treat than pain that is tackled immediately. So it is important to nip it in the bud as soon as possible. If three or four doses per day of pain-killers from your reserve stock are necessary to relieve you, this means that your treatment needs readjustment.

### Additional ways of dealing with it

The touch of a masseur (with the consent of your oncologist) may modify how you perceive the pain. Self-hypnosis offers well-tested methods, and music therapy or relaxation techniques effectively distract attention from what is stimulating the pain.

### Some advice

- ▶ Tell us about your pain, even if it is slight. That way we can anticipate and adapt your treatment appropriately.
- ▶ Take your reserve medication whenever necessary in accordance with the prescription (in addition to your basic pain-killing treatment). The reserve doses make it possible to match the treatment more closely to your needs.
- ▶ Tell us about any undesirable effects of the prescribed pain medication (constipation, nausea, dry mouth).
- ▶ Let the care team know if the pain persists, changes or moves. They can then adapt the treatment and find the reasons for the changes. A new pain may be a warning signal.
- ▶ Pain affects your whole being. It is increased by anxiety and may undermine your morale. Help from a psychologist can be of real benefit.

This card was translated by



## N. B.

HUG brochures, *Vous avez mal? Agissons ensemble!* [Are you in pain? Let's tackle it together] *La morphine: des réponses à vos questions* [Morphine: your questions answered] *Patchs contre la douleur contenant des dérivés de la morphine. Des réponses aux questions les plus fréquentes* [Morphine-derivative pain patches. Replies to FAQs]. Ligue suisse contre le cancer brochure, *Vivre avec le cancer, sans douleur* [Living with cancer, painlessly].



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