

# PorcuPAIN

## Don't Get Stuck With Pain

June 2010



Caregivers play a key role in the support and treatment of persons in pain. Assessing pain is the first step to helping. There are many tools that can be used by residents to rate pain. Ask what works best for each resident and use that same pain scale all of the time. Choices may include:

- Numeric rating scale
- Verbal descriptor scale
- Pain thermometer
- Wong-Baker faces scale

Some residents have problems thinking clearly and can not use scales. Staff may use facial or eye cues to detect pain and pain relief for these residents. There are also special pain tools for staff to use. These include:

- PAINAD (Pain Assessment in Advanced Dementia)
- PADE (Pain Assessment for the Dementing Elderly)

Working in a nursing home gives staff the chance to get to know their resident's usual behavior and daily habits. Sometimes pain can be noticed by checking other things. Pain may cause:

- Weight loss
- Falls
- Trouble sleeping
- Less movement
- Decrease in ADLs
- Changes in mood or actions

Treatment tips for caregivers:

- Ask for family input to help with detection of pain in their loved one. Relatives can provide past reasons for pain as well.
- The best way to control persistent pain is for the resident to receive medication on a regular basis.
- If you know that a certain activity causes pain, make sure the resident gets medication beforehand.

Use a variety of non-medication therapies such as:

- Distraction
- Repositioning
- Massage
- Calming statements
- Story telling
- Music
- Emotional support
- Humor and laughter
- Exercise
- Heat and/or cold therapy

You can make a difference in helping your residents have better pain control. Most importantly, pain relief will improve their quality of life.

References:

Littlehale, S., Niemi, J., & Capitosti, S. (2007). Improving pain management. *Provider*, 33(10), 55-56, 59-60.  
Mentes, C., Teer, J., & Cadogan, M. (2004). The pain experience of cognitively impaired nursing home residents: Perceptions of family members and certified nursing assistants. *Pain Management Nursing*, 5(3), 118-125.

MoLANE Planning Committee Members:

- Missouri Pain Initiative
- Missouri Association of Homes for the Aging
- Missouri Health Care Association
- Missouri Coalition Celebrating Care Continuum Change
- Missouri Association of Nursing Home Administrators
- Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
- Missouri League for Nursing
- Missouri State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- Missouri Board of Nursing Home Administrators
- National Association of Health Care Assistants
- Primaris, Missouri's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization
- Quality Improvement Program for Missouri (QIPMO)

**Watch for more PAIN tips!**