

# Chronic Pain Self-Management Plan

- Take medicines only as prescribed.
- Get opioids from only one provider and fill your prescription at one pharmacy.
- Check with your pharmacist or medical provider before drinking alcohol when taking medicines.
- Do not skip or double up on your medicines.
- Do not restart your medicines once you stop without checking with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Tell your doctor about ALL medicines you are taking, including over-the-counter vitamins and all supplements.

## Green Flags – All Clear



### If you have:

- No pain
- Pain does not limit what you are able to do.
- If you are taking medicine, particularly a stronger pain reliever like an opioid, your bowel patterns are regular (e.g., every day, every other day)

## What this means ...

- Your symptoms/pain is under control or in a range that does not limit your daily activities
- Your pain level could be considered controlled or “mild discomfort”.
- Continue to take your medicine as ordered by your doctor.

**Keep up the great work!**

## Yellow Flags – Caution



### If you have:

- Pain that limits what you are able to do or
- Pain that interferes with what you want or need to do, including your basic care needs or makes it difficult to concentrate.
- Pain that causes low mood or less interest in social activities.
- No regular bowel movement for 3 or more days

## What this means ...

- You may need your medicine adjusted
- Talk with your medical provider about elimination problems.
- Your pain level is considered moderately controlled or “moderate discomfort”

**Call your doctor, consulting nurse, or health care provider if symptoms do not improve.**

**Name:**

**Number:**

**Instructions:**

**If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.**

## Red Flags – Stop and Think



### If you have:

- Pain that is severe
- You cannot take care of your basic needs
- The pain does not respond to medicine
- Pain is constant without relief
- Shallow breathing or trouble staying awake
- No bowel movements

## What this means ...

- Your pain level could be considered uncontrolled or “severe discomfort”
- You may be having a severe side effect to the pain-relieving medicine.
- **Do not take your next dose of opioid**
- You need to be evaluated by a health care professional immediately.

**If possible, notify your health care provider's office.**

**Name:**

**Number:**

**Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1**

**If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 911. Emergency!**

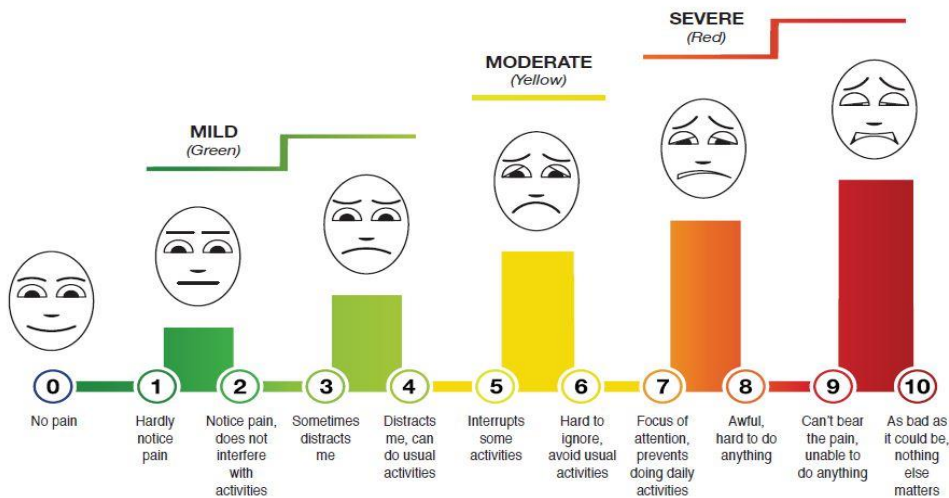
# Pain Fast Facts

- Everyone experiences pain differently. What is mild for one person is severe for another.
- **Acute** pain is a pain that lasts less than 6 months, you usually know the cause, and it disappears when the injury heals.
- **Chronic pain** is defined as unpleasant sensation and emotional experience. It is ongoing or recurrent pain, lasting beyond the usual course of acute illness or injury or more than 3 to 6 months, and which adversely affects the individual's well-being.
- There are several types of pain, including pain at the site of an injury, muscle pain, pain caused by damage to nerves, and others.
- It is important to know that a pain-free state may not be possible; however, pain management treatments may help make the pain easier to manage.

## What can you do?

- Take medications only as prescribed.
- Have a comprehensive (complete) pain assessment if you experience chronic pain.
- Work with your health care provider and know what medicines you should take for what type of pain.
- Consider learning about a range of strategies that can help you best cope and increase your confidence for managing chronic pain.
- Reduce stressors
- With your health care provider, learn what types of exercise and daily activities might be helpful for you.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Learn about lifestyle choices that result in a good restful night's sleep.
- Consider a Living Well with Chronic Conditions-Chronic Pain class.

### Defense and Veterans Pain Rating Scale

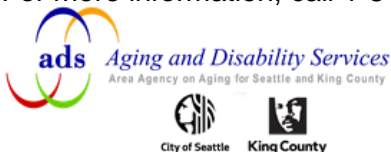


## Aging and Disability Services

v 2.0

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County— plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County.

For more information, call 1-844-348-5464 or e-mail [info@communitylivingconnections.org](mailto:info@communitylivingconnections.org)



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