



Patient Education Sheet

Oncology Nursing Society
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How Can I Manage Nociceptive Pain?

Nociceptive pain is caused by an injury to body tissues, such as a cut, scrape, bruise, bone fracture, or burn. As a patient with cancer, you may experience nociceptive pain directly from a tumor or as a result of cancer treatment.

Here are simple tips and techniques that you can discuss with your healthcare provider to relieve nociceptive pain.

Most Helpful

- **Drugs:** Your healthcare provider may prescribe the following drugs to treat nociceptive pain.
 - Acetaminophen can reduce pain and fever (if fever is present).
 - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and corticosteroids reduce swelling and inflammation and also have pain-relieving properties.
 - Opioids bind to pain receptor sites to reduce pain. Many forms of opioids exist: Some are short acting; others are long acting. Some are synthetically made. The type of opioid used depends on your symptoms, previous pain medications tried, and other variables. The most common opioid is morphine.
 - Local anesthetics can numb pain directly.

Likely to Be Helpful

- **Bisphosphonates:** These drugs inhibit the activity of cells that cause cancer-ridden bones to break down abnormally.
- **Injection of radioactive medicine:** These drugs act only on cancer cells, sparing healthy tissue. A radioactive medicine consists of two parts: a “targeting molecule,” which is attracted to cancer sites; and a radioactive tracer, which delivers low-dose radiation to the targeted cancer cells.

May or May Not Be Helpful

- **Spinal Opioids:** In some patients, spinal opioids may improve pain relief while limiting side effects.
- **Caffeine:** Caffeine may be given with aspirin-like drugs to improve pain relief. Rebound pain and headache may occur when use is stopped abruptly.

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Not Enough Evidence

Although you may find that these techniques work for you, not enough studies have been done to show that they work to alleviate nociceptive pain.

- Antihistamines
- Dextroamphetamine
- Ketamine
- Skeletal muscle relaxants
- Topical agents
- Tetrodotoxin

Questions for Your Healthcare Provider

Always consult your healthcare provider before adding any new treatments or other interventions into your routine.

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