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Information for patients Paediatric Pain Relief



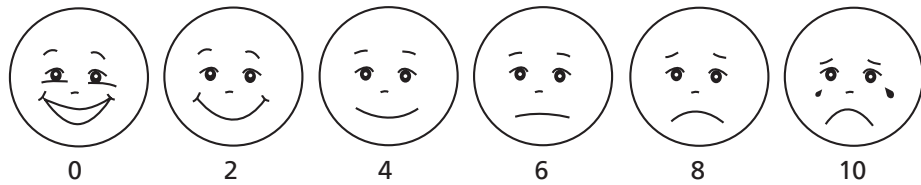
Alice Ward



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Our aim is to keep you / your child as comfortable as possible whilst on Alice Ward, particularly following surgery. To achieve this, we work as a team using a variety of pain control methods such as tablets, medicines, suppositories, infusion pumps, local anaesthetics and epidurals. Injections are rarely used but should we need to obtain a blood sample or insert a line into a vein, a local anaesthetic cream will be applied first to numb the area and reduce any discomfort.

To assess your child's degree of pain we use the Visual Analogue Scale example shown below or a scale of 0–10 depending on the age and understanding of your child.



This is both a numerical scale and a visual one, thus younger children are able to point to the face which represents how they feel. This along with your help enables us to assess your child's level of pain more accurately and respond with appropriate analgesia.

Mild Pain

Paracetamol (Calpol), Ibuprofen and Diclofenac are all commonly used and can be given either in tablet, liquid or suppository form.

Moderate/severe Pain

If necessary stronger, Morphine based, oral analgesia (painkillers) may be given such as Oramorph and Oxycodone, and for those aged over 12 years, Codeine. Diazepam is often used to control muscle spasms especially for children with Cerebral Palsy.

Post Operative Pain

For some more complex operations your child may return from theatre with a pain-relieving pump. For an older child this may be a patient controlled device where a line is inserted into a vein (whilst your child is asleep) and is connected to a machine.

Regional or Local Nerve Blocks

Central blocks obstruct the nerves at the spinal level as with an epidural. This consists of a fine tube placed into the nerves around the lower spine whilst under anaesthetic. It is connected to an infusion pump that delivers a set amount of local anaesthetic. The aim of these is to numb the area affected by the operation as well as the whole of the lower half of the body which is why a urinary catheter is necessary. In young children this is often given as a single injection called 'Caudal' instead of a continuous infusion. In this case a urinary catheter is not usually required. Peripheral nerve techniques block a specific nerve group or group of nerves which supply a limited region, i.e, arm or leg. Local anaesthetic may also be infiltrated in and around the surgical site keeping that specific area numb for a limited time.

Nausea and Vomiting

Sometimes children feel sick after an anaesthetic, or while having infusions of some painkillers. We will try to prevent this by giving an appropriate medicine if necessary.

Finally

If you have any worries about your child's pain control, please tell us. Managing pain is a combined effort between your child, you and the nursing and medical staff, so it is important that we all talk to each other to achieve effective pain relief. Using distraction techniques, play, repositioning and small home comforts also helps with reducing discomfort.