

the pain scale: what it really means

- ① No pain - you feel like your normal self.
 - ② The pain is an occasional annoyance - like a bruise.
 - ③ Occasional twinges of stronger pain - like being pinched.
 - ④ Pain that is intense, like when a doctor gives you a shot; it comes and goes.
You can do physical movements, stretches, or massages that help.
 - ⑤ The pain can be ignored when you are busy, but it doesn't really go away.
You take medicine when it gets to be too much.
 - ⑥ The pain can't be ignored for more than a few minutes at a time.
You spend a lot of time and energy trying to manage it.
 - ⑦ Pain can never be ignored. It's harder to concentrate.
However, you still participate in normal activities, and try to socialize.
 - ⑧ You only function with great effort. Pain disturbs your sleep.
Sometimes you can't think clearly. You have new mood swings.
You can't do some activities without assistance
(laundry, shopping, showering, for example), due to the pain.
 - ⑨ You can no longer do most physical activities. You need help at home.
Most of the time, it's hard to speak clearly or have a conversation.
You and your family may think your personality has changed.
 - ⑩ Pain is so severe, you demand painkillers or surgery, whatever the cost or risk,
and might even think about killing yourself. You are unable to speak clearly.
You often cry, moan, or shout. You should not be left alone at home.
- ⑩ Medical emergency!
- The pain is so terrible and uncontrollable, you are unable to eat, drink, or walk.
You have abnormal vital signs and lab tests.
You must be admitted to the hospital for medical care and IV drugs.