

# Manage Pain on Your Terms

**TOO MUCH  
TO LOSE**

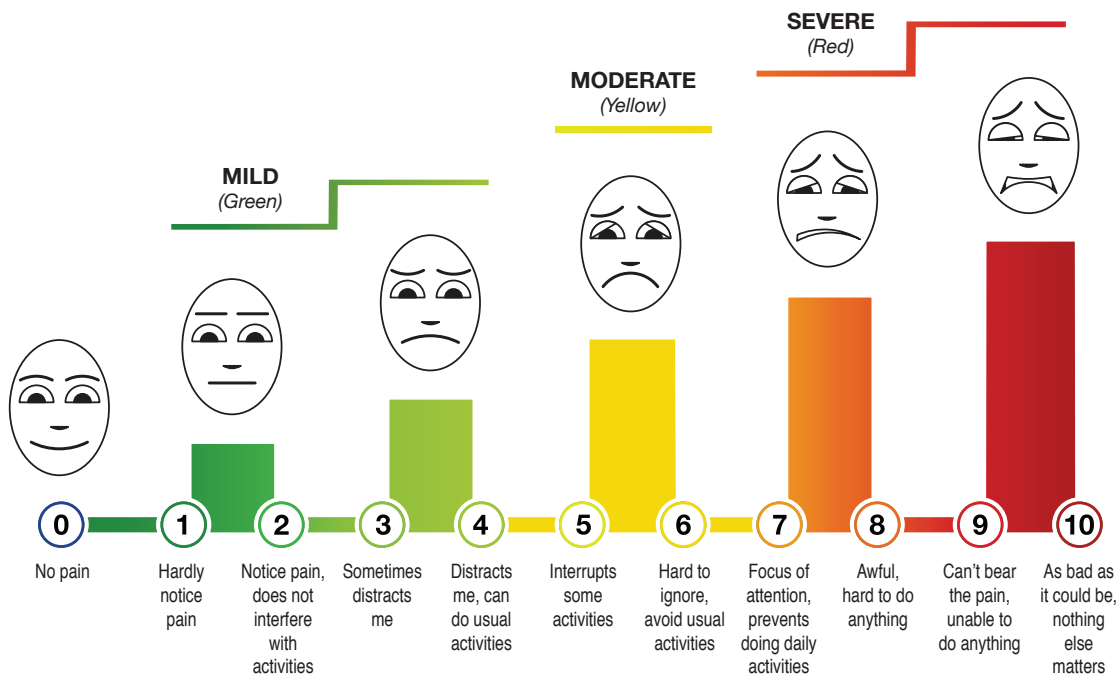
**GET THE TRUTH  
ON RISKY DRUG USE**

Do you regularly deal with pain? You can take control of your situation. Follow these steps before, during and after your medical appointment to find the best way to manage your pain.

## Step 1: Be Prepared

Be prepared when you go in for your appointment. Think about questions your health care provider may ask so you are ready to answer:

- Family history of chronic pain and/or drug abuse or addiction
- Where the pain is located (be specific and point to the area if possible)
- The type of pain (such as burning, stinging, aching or stabbing)
- When the pain occurs (all day, at certain times, during or after certain activities)
- What has been used to relieve the pain so far
- The impact of the pain on your daily life, activities and job, and where it rates on the Pain Rating Scale\* below



\*The Defense and Veterans Pain Rating Scale

Flip this sheet over for Step 2 >



U.S. Department of Defense

[www.toomuchtolose.org](http://www.toomuchtolose.org)

# Step 2: Ask Questions

Prepare questions for your health care provider and/or pharmacist so you can choose the best way to manage your pain for your job and life. Here are some ideas:

- What can I do on my own to relieve my pain? Would yoga or rest help? Should I ice the injury or apply heat to where it hurts?
  - › Read more about self-care and strategies for pain management.
    - Too Much to Lose: [Managing Pain](#)
    - HPRC: [Pain Management](#)
- What alternative pain management options are available at my military treatment facility (MTF)? Would any of these options (such as chiropractor visits, acupuncture or physical therapy) help manage my pain in addition to or instead of prescription drugs?
- As a Service member, do I need a waiver to take this medication? Will taking the medication impact my job/duty status?
- What are the potential side effects of this medication?
- Can I become dependent on or addicted to this medication? If so, how quickly?
- When is the best time of day to take this medication?
- Should I take this medication on an empty or full stomach?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- What should I do if I feel like the medication is not relieving my pain?
- Does this medication interact with any food or other medications I am already taking?
- When should I stop taking the medication?

Take a picture of the Step 2 questions **BEFORE** heading into the patient room!

Be sure to talk to your health care provider for [chiropractic visits](#), acupuncture or physical therapy even if it's located within the MTF.

Visit [Tricare.mil/mtf](https://www.tricare.mil/mtf) to search for an MTF near you and review available specialties.

# Step 3: Take As Prescribed

If your health care provider prescribes you a medication, take it as instructed and keep track of how it affects you by using these tips:

- Take your prescription as instructed on the medication bottle and as told to you by your health care provider and/or pharmacist.
- Be aware of any side effects that occur once you start the medication. After you start taking the medication, it might be helpful to keep a log of how you feel each day.
- If you have any negative side effects or feel that the prescription is not helping relieve your pain, contact your health care provider. If you feel a strong need to take the medication, contact your health care provider as this could be a sign that you are developing a dependence.
- If you experience symptoms that are threatening to life, limbs or eyesight; require immediate medical treatment; or put you at immediate risk of serious harm to yourself or others, call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room.
  - › Learn more about when to seek emergency care: [Tricare.mil/Emergency/](https://www.tricare.mil/Emergency/).
- [Dispose of extra medication correctly.](#)