

Pain Topics

Pain Information for Your Patient

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Patients and families are searching the Internet for information on pain. The American Pain Foundation estimates that more than 50 million Americans suffer from chronic pain, with another 25 million experiencing acute pain as a result of injury or surgery. At the same time a study from the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that 8 of 10 Americans on the Internet have searched for health information either for themselves or someone in their family. What will they find there? How can you help your patients locate information they can trust related to pain issues?

With an abundance of health information available on-line, patients are faced with the daunting task of weeding through good information and bad information. Some general guidelines can be helpful to discuss with patients to assist them in evaluating a web site for quality health information. These guidelines include:

- ◆ **Site sponsor:** Is the site sponsored by a reputable organization and is its purpose clearly stated? If the site appears very commercial (lots of advertisements to buy a product) then beware, they may not offer unbiased information about a health topic.
- ◆ **Content:** Does the information appear to be targeted to the general public? Is the information easy to read and understand? Are all aspects of the subject covered adequately? Are graphics used to help convey information?
- ◆ **Authorship:** Who are the authors? What are their qualifications? What are their credentials and affiliations? Do they cite their sources? Do the authors make extravagant claims or offer health advice? Is contact information provided?
- ◆ **Currency:** How current is the web site? When was the information last updated? The date of publication should be clearly posted and revision dates should be recent enough to ensure you are getting the most updated medical information available.
- ◆ **Navigation:** Is the web site easy to use? The site should be organized in a logical manner so you can easily access the information you are looking for. A search mechanism can be helpful as well.

Recommended Online Resources

Below is a collection of **pain** websites recommended for patients by the Treadwell Library and the Blum Patient and Family Learning Center. They have been reviewed for quality and meet the criteria above.

MedlinePlus (National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health)

A comprehensive consumer health directory that takes the user to authoritative sources of information. Many resources on pain including interactive tutorials.

1. go to MedlinePlus web site: <http://www.medlineplus.org>
2. type PAIN in search box and click "search medlineplus"
3. click on specific area desired (ie: pain, abdominal pain, back pain, etc.)

Pain Information Library from the American Pain Foundation

<http://www.painfoundation.org/page.asp?file=Library/Index.htm>

Provides people with pain with practical, up-to-date, scientifically-sound information about pain and pain management.

American Chronic Pain Association:

<http://www.theacpa.org>

Educational materials and peer support and for individuals with chronic pain

Pain Management Online:

http://www.painmngt.com/education/education_menu.html

Although this is a commercial site, they offer many excellent patient education resources, including printable color brochures.

Pain.Com:

<http://www.pain.com/sections/consumers/>

Consumers who have an interest in pain management will find information on pain assessment, drug assistance programs, a support group, and a “library” of study abstracts.

National Pain Foundation:

<http://www.nationalpainfoundation.org/>

Excellent online education and support community for persons in pain, their families and physicians. Features include disparities in pain, new treatments, drug approvals and nutrition advice.

WebMD on pain:

http://www.webmd.com/diseases_and_conditions/pain.htm

Although there are many advertisements to be ignored, this collection of pain resources includes a Pain Management Guide from the Cleveland Clinic.

Specialized Pain Resources: Cancer Pain

Cancer Pain Treatment Guidelines (the National Comprehensive Cancer Network and the American Cancer Society):

http://www.nccn.org/patients/patient_gls/english/pain/contents.asp

Digital Information for Patients (DIP) – MGH access only.

<http://is.partners.org/dip>

A carefully selected collection for cancer patients with over 500 treatment fact-sheets, patient handouts, illustrations, journal articles, and book chapters. Type “pain” in the search box.

National Cancer Institute Pain Control:

<http://www.nci.nih.gov/cancerinfo/paincontrol>

Information about pain control methods, medicines for cancer pain, and non-drug treatments for cancer pain, written in easy to read language.

Specialized Pain Resources: for children and their families

Kidshealth:

<http://www.kidshealth.org>

Providing doctor-approved health information about children from before birth through adolescence. Select a group, Kids (K), Teens (T) or Parents (P) and then type “pain” in search.

Pediatric Pain:

<http://www.pediatric-pain.ca/index.html>

From Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, this site has educational materials for parents and children as well as professionals.

Specialized Pain Resources: Complementary and Integrative Therapies

Integrative Pain Management

<http://www.healingchronicpain.org/content/introduction/default.asp>

From Beth Israel University Hospital, NY. Describes an approach to pain management that includes a spectrum of therapies from drugs to stress reduction. Click on the links listed across the top of the page to see topics covered.

Acupuncture Fact Sheet from NIH/National center for Complementary & Alternative Medicine

<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/acupuncture/>

Magnets to Treat Pain. NIH Research Report

<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/magnet/magnet.htm>

MD Anderson Cancer Center- Reviews of Therapies

<http://www.mdanderson.org/departments/cimer/>

Click on “Reviews of Therapies” to find evidence-based reviews from Natural Standard and this nationally respected cancer center. Acupuncture, energy therapies and mind/body therapies are frequently used to treat pain.

MindBody Institute (Herbert Benson, MD)

http://www.mbmi.org/about/whoweare_staff.asp

A local institute, run by a Harvard Medical faculty member, offers Mind/Body therapies for pain.

MGH Resources

MGH Cares About Pain Relief:

<http://www.massgeneral.org/painrelief/>

A MGH website offering resources to clinicians and patients about educational, clinical and research programs available to assist with managing pain. Includes quick access to the booklet, *What you need to know about pain: a guide for patients and families*, written at MGH.

MGH Pain Center:

<http://www.mgh.harvard.edu/paincenter/>

A clinical and educational service available at MGH offering medical staff training and pain management services for patients. Patients can receive care within several clinical services that include the Outpatient Clinic, Acute Pain Service, Cancer and Chronic Pain Service, and Acupuncture Service.

MGH Palliative Care Service

<http://www.massgeneral.org/palliativecare/>

Works with other departments at MGH on pain management and patient comfort issues.

MGH Intranet: via Partners Applications/Clinical References.

- ◆ **CareNotes:** Produced by MicroMedex, CareNotes is a customizable, patient education document system that contains over 4,000 documents on a variety of medical conditions in English and Spanish. Once in the database, type “pain” into the search field. Choose the document title and the language you need.
- ◆ **MGH Drug Formulary/Lexi-Pals:** Drug monographs available in 16 different languages. Patients can learn about their pain medications from these easy-to-read patient focused materials. Search for a drug, then click on “Lexi-Pals” link for patient version of information. Use drop-down menu to select language.

- ◆ **PCOI:** Primary Care Office InSite-- a collaboration of MGH Primary Care Office Improvement (PCOI) and the MGH Laboratory of Computer Science (registration required). Look under Patient Information for pain materials.

http://oi.mgh.harvard.edu/pcoi/frontpage_frames.asp

Patient Education Video Channel: An on-demand video service available through any cable-accessed television at MGH. Dial 4-5212 to access the service and enter the video number using the phone touch pad. A TV channel will be assigned to view the video. All video titles and assigned numbers can be viewed on Channel 31, or a printed list of video titles/numbers is available in the Partners Handbook via the Patient Education Information link (MGH Patient Education Television Channel)

Pain management video titles include:

- ◆ Acute Pain Management: video # 120
- ◆ Beating Chronic Pain: When the Hurting Won't Stop: video # 115
- ◆ Pain Management: video # 105
- ◆ Pain Management The Three R's: video # 154
- ◆ Patient Controlled Analgesia: video # 153

Additional pamphlets/brochures, books and journals on pain management are available at the Blum Patient and Family Learning Center (White building)

<http://www.massgeneral.org/pflc>

Cancer Resource Rooms (Yawkey 8 and Cox 1)

<http://www.massgeneral.org/cancer/crr/index.asp>

Patients can drop in and pick up materials that they need. Staff in these resource rooms and at Treadwell Library can also do more in-depth searches for information.

Information in other languages:

MedlinePlus en español.

<http://medlineplus.gov/spanish/>

Type in "dolor" and view a selection

Cancer Pain Treatment Guidelines in Spanish (from NCCN)

http://www.nccn.org/patients/patient_gls/_spanish/_pain/contents.asp

EurasiaHealth Knowledge Network

<http://www.eurasiahealth.org/index.jsp?sid=1&id=3542&pid=3540>

Type pain in the search box and retrieve information in Russian, Ukrainian, and other languages of Central Europe

National Cancer Institute – publications in Spanish for cancer patients. May be read online or printed as a booklet.

El dolor relacionado con el cáncer (Understanding Cancer Pain)

<https://cissecure.nci.nih.gov/ncipubs/details.asp?pid=245>

Control del dolor: Guía para las personas con cáncer y sus familias (Pain Control: A Guide for People With Cancer and Their Families)

<https://cissecure.nci.nih.gov/ncipubs/details.asp?pid=635>