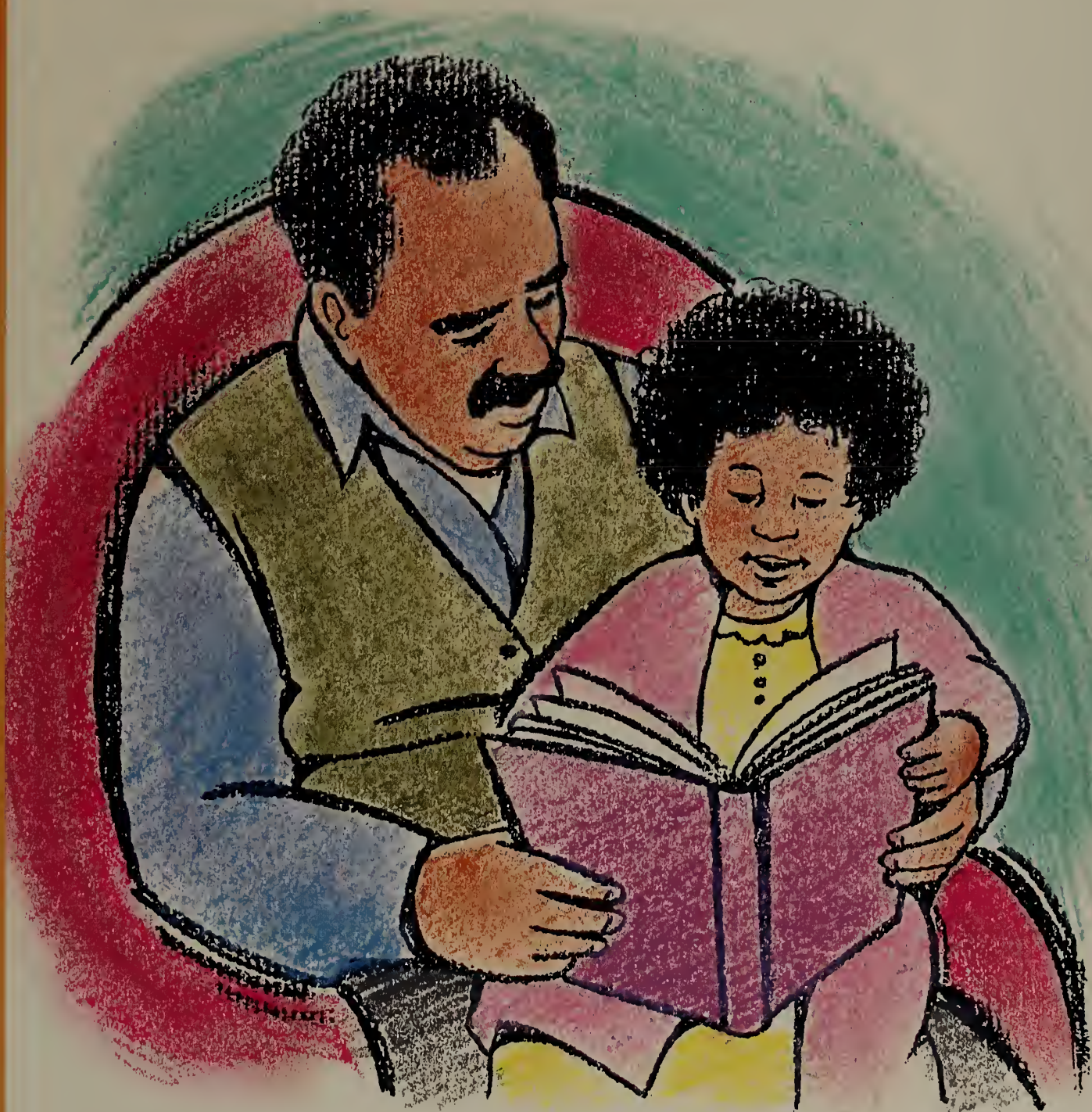


Get Relief From Cancer Pain

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Resource Center
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NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

National Cancer Institute

If you're in pain, get relief.

Medicine and other treatments can almost always relieve cancer pain. Treating pain is an important part of good cancer care. Pain relief can also help you enjoy life more.

To get relief, talk to your doctor or nurse as soon as pain begins.

Tell them:

- ▶ All the places it hurts
- ▶ How strong the pain feels
- ▶ What makes the pain worse
- ▶ What eases the pain
- ▶ How much relief you get from medicines you take



Ask them:

- ▶ What medicine(s) can you give me to relieve my pain?
- ▶ How and when should I take the medicine(s) and for how long?
- ▶ What side effects are common? What should be done if they occur?
- ▶ Should I try non-drug methods to relieve my pain, too, like relaxation or massage.



Don't Let Worries Like These Keep You in Pain:

► I'm afraid of becoming addicted.

FACT: When cancer pain medicines are given and taken in the right way, patients rarely become addicted to them. To be sure, talk to the doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to use pain medicines safely.

Many patients only need pain medicines for a time, until the cause of their pain goes away. When they are ready to stop taking the medicine, the doctor gradually lowers the amount of medicine they take. By the time they stop using it completely, the body has had time to adjust.

Some patients will need to take pain medicines for the long-term. Taking medicines regularly should not make you feel like an "addict." You are following your doctor's advice and getting a treatment you need.

▶ I don't want to seem like a "complainer."

FACT: You have a right to ask for pain relief. In fact, telling the doctor or nurse about pain is what all patients **SHOULD** do. The sooner you speak up, the better. It's often easier to control pain in its early stages, before it becomes severe.

▶ I don't want to lose control.

FACT: Most people do not get "high" or lose control when they take cancer pain medicines in the right way. You may feel sleepy when you first take some pain medicines, but this feeling often goes away after a few days.

A few people get dizzy or feel confused when they take cancer pain medicines. Tell the doctor or nurse if this happens to you. Changing your dose or type of medicine usually can solve the problem.

Taking care of pain is important. It helps you feel stronger and cope better with your cancer.

Pain can cause:	Pain can interfere with:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tiredness• Depression• Anger• Worry• Loneliness• Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily activities• Interest in work and hobbies• Sleeping• Eating• Enjoying friends and family• Enjoying life

Help yourself by asking your doctor or nurse for pain relief when you need it. It's your right. Then find out how to take your medicines safely, and follow your doctor's advice. It's your role in getting the best cancer care.

For more details on cancer pain relief or other cancer-related information, call the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service at **1-800-4-CANCER** (1-800-422-6237). Persons with TTY equipment, dial **1-800-332-8615**.

Get Relief From Cancer Pain was adapted from **Cancer Pain Relief**, developed by Pamela Kedziera, RN, MSN, OCN, and Michael H. Levy, MD, PhD, at the Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia, PA.



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