

## Patient information

# Pain control for children

It is important that your child's pain is well controlled, enabling them to feel comfortable and therefore to make a good recovery.

Effective pain relief is achieved by giving medicine regularly rather than waiting for your child to indicate they have pain.

### Medication

- **Paracetamol** (also called Calpol, Disprol, Parapaed etc)
  - This may be given to control mild pain e.g. after insertion of grommets, extraction of teeth but also if your child is suffering from a cold or is unsettled.
  - Paracetamol may be given every 4 – 6 hours with a **maximum of 4 doses in 24 hours**.
  - It is important to read the instructions for dosage on the bottle.
- **Ibuprofen** (also called Junifen, Nurofen, Calprofen)
  - Ibuprofen is an alternative type of pain relief medication. It does not contain paracetamol.
  - Ibuprofen may be given every 6 - 8 hours and may be given **up to 4 times a day depending on your child's age** – please read and follow instructions on your medicine bottle.
  - Ibuprofen should be given with food or a milky drink.
  - Ibuprofen can have some side effects:
    - If your child complains of tummy ache after the ibuprofen medicine it may not suit them and it would be advisable to stop giving it.
    - It may occasionally cause asthmatic children to become wheezy, if this happens it is also advisable to stop giving it.

Paracetamol **and** Ibuprofen will be most effective in controlling moderate pain if they are given at staggered times so that, as one type wears off the other starts working. However if your child has severe pain these medicines can be given at the same time.

## Alternative pain relief

- **Reassurance:** With some children, fear and anxiety can increase their pain. Ensure you explain to your child what has happened and the reason for the pain.
- **Relaxation:** Your nurse or play therapist can give you ideas on relaxation techniques. Books are usually available from libraries. It could be as simple as playing some favourite music.
- **Positioning:** Help your child to find a comfortable position. A broken limb may be more comfortable when elevated on a pillow. A child who is concerned about staining the sheets or pillows may find it easier to relax if they have a towel placed under the affected area.
- **Distraction techniques:** Many children find it useful to concentrate on other activities such as a story, jigsaw or video. This does not mean they forget their pain, but it may help them to cope.
- **'Guided imagery'** may be useful: the child picks a favourite occasion, like a trip to the coast and an adult takes them through the event, from getting up in the morning, dressing, eating breakfast and events at the seaside.
- **Warmth:** Some children find wheat bags helpful (available from some chemists or health food shops). Alternatively heat a towel on the radiator or in the tumble dryer.
- **Massage and positive touch:** Your child may find comfort from gentle touch or massage.

## Further advice

If you are worried or need advice you can call the following departments who can best advise you on what to do:

- Rainbow ward 01284 713315 (24hrs a day)
- Your own GP/GP out of hours
- NHS 111

