



General Authority for Health Services for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi
Al-Rahba Hospital

Pain Management for Infants

Pain is an uncomfortable feeling that tells you that something may be wrong with your body. Infants feel pain, but they cannot talk to us about that pain. They tell us with other signals that they are uncomfortable or in pain.

What are the signals that tell me that my baby is in pain?

Crying is a signal that most babies make when they are uncomfortable. This discomfort could be from hunger, gas, or pain. If a baby is in pain he/she often show other behaviors such as:

- Facial grimacing, open mouth, deep lines around the nose and furrows in the brow
- Bodily changes such as stiffening of the arms and legs, loss in muscle tone
- Inability to sleep, restlessness or being very quiet
- Inability to be calmed with comforting or eating
- Physical symptoms such as changes in heart and breathing rate and increases in blood pressure.
- Inability to feed.



Babies who are premature and/or very ill may not have the energy to cry and move when they are in pain. Your baby's caregivers will be watching very closely for signs of pain and discomfort. You can also help by watching to see if your baby is comfortable.

What can be done to keep my baby as comfortable as possible?

Your baby's nurses are very skilled in recognizing discomfort in infants and providing comfort measures. These measures may include pain medication (such as morphine and Tylenol) or sedatives (such as Ativan). To achieve the best control over discomfort, your baby may need a combination of these medications.

If pain medications are prescribed for your child, please:



- Make sure you know who and when to call if your child's pain is not well controlled.
- Learn the possible side effects of the medication.
- Follow carefully the directions on the label.
- Use the specific dropper, syringe or medicine cup.

There are also comfort measures that do not involve giving medication. These include positioning, touching, and providing a quiet, dimly lit environment. Soft music, giving your baby a pacifier, and swaddling or containing the baby to avoid uncontrolled movements are also helpful. You will be able to provide many of these measures and help comfort your baby.

Your baby's caregivers will help you learn how to read your baby's signals that tell us if he/she is uncomfortable. They can also help you learn different comfort measures. As you spend time with your baby, you will become familiar with his/her behaviors. You will also know which things provide comfort. If you have questions about your baby's pain and comfort measures, please ask your baby's nurse or physician.