# Pain Assessment Scales

The National Initiative on Pain Control™ (NIPC™) has provided these diagnostic tools to assist you in assessing the severity and quality of pain experienced by your patients. We suggest that you produce multiple photocopies so that you may obtain written feedback to place in the patient's history file.

Wong-Baker FACES Pain Rating Scale

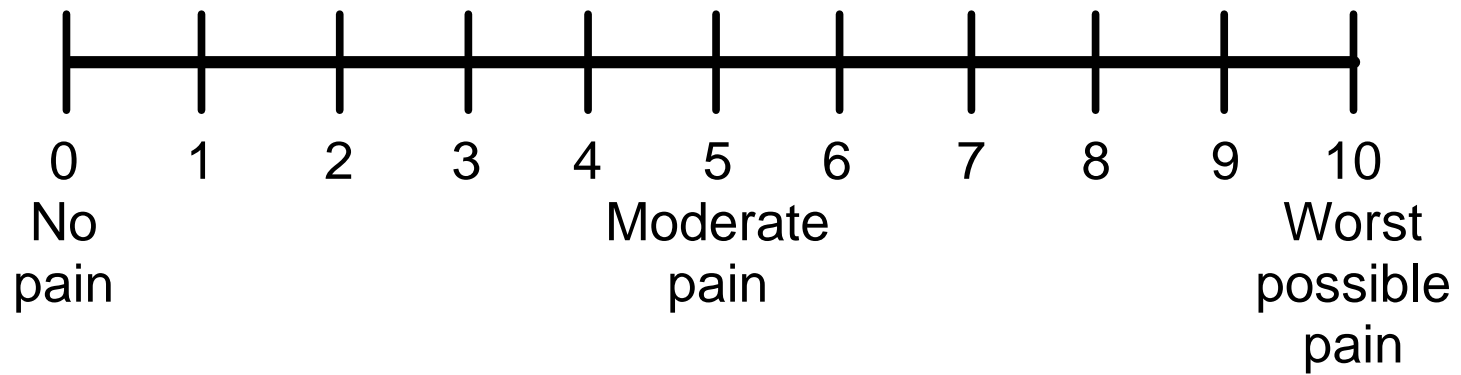| No Hurt	Hurts Little Bit	Hurts Little More	Hurts Even More	Hurts Whole Lot	Hurts Worst
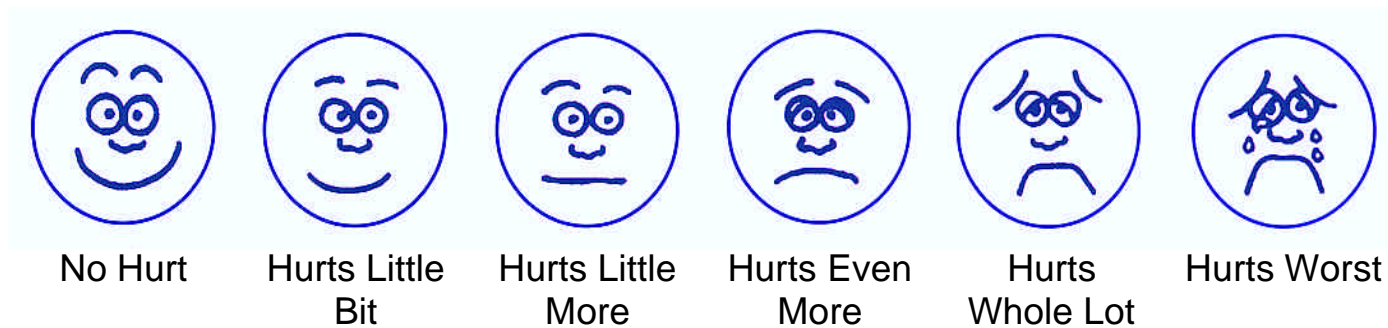
Explain to the person that each face is for a person who feels happy because he has no pain (hurt) or sad because he has some or a lot of pain. Face 0 is very happy because he doesn't hurt at all. Face 1 hurts just a little bit. Face 2 hurts a little more. Face 3 hurts even more. Face 4 hurts a whole lot. Face 5 hurts as much as you can image, although you don't have to be crying to feel this bad. Ask the person to choose the face that best describes how he is feeling.
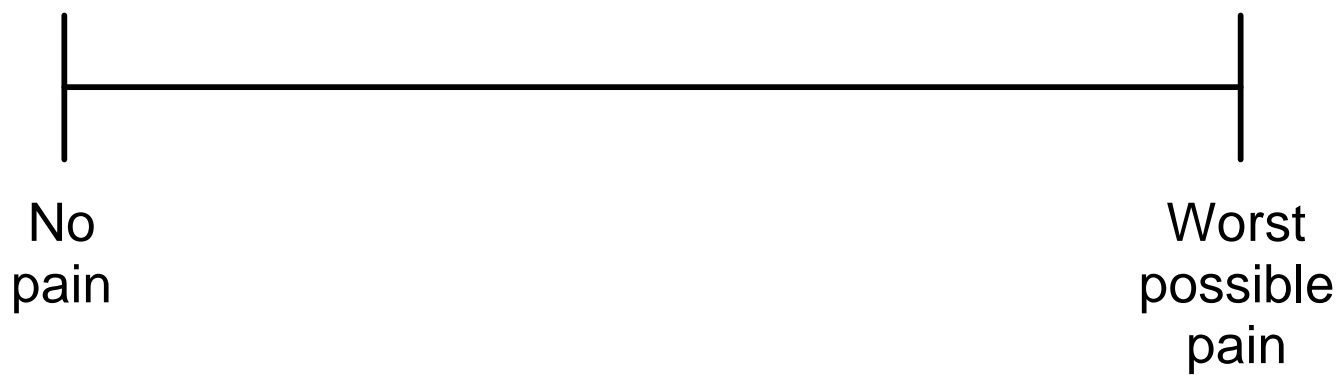
Rating scale is recommended for persons age 3 years and older.

Brief word instructions: Point to each face using the words to describe the pain intensity. Ask the child to choose face that best describes own pain and record the appropriate number.
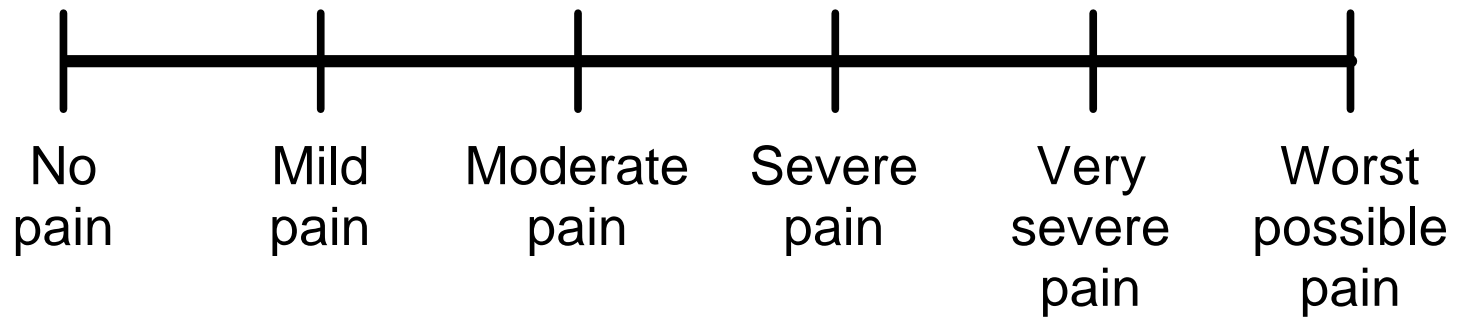
0–10 Numeric Pain Rating Scale

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

No
pain

Moderate
pain

Worst
possible
pain

Visual Analog Scale

No
pain

Worst
possible
pain

Verbal Pain Intensity Scale

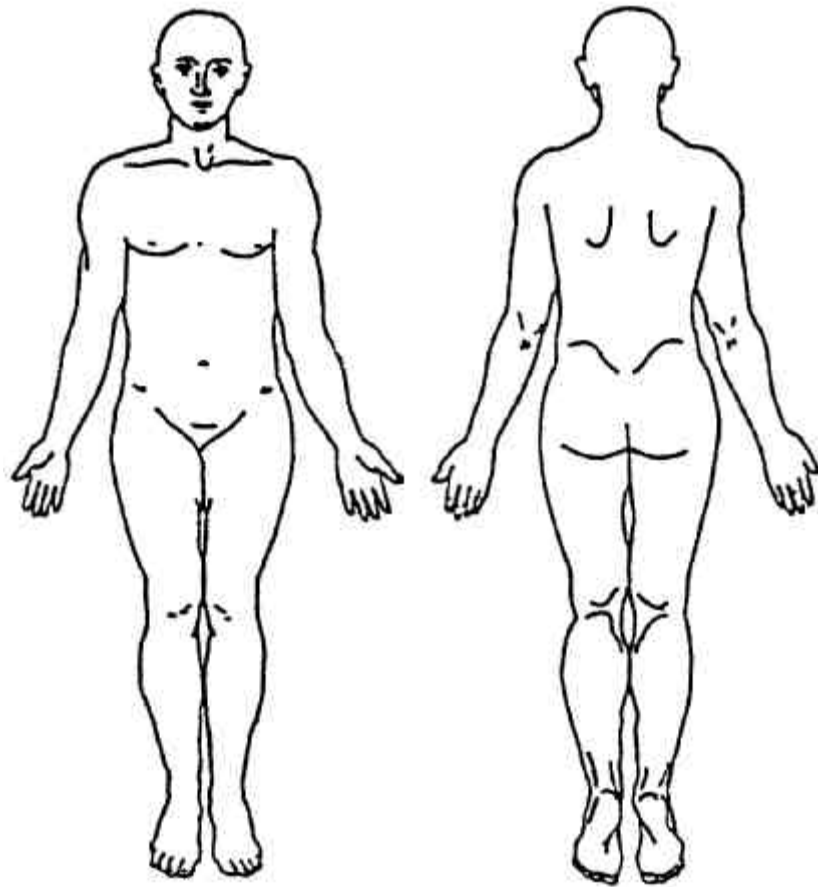|					
No pain	Mild pain	Moderate pain	Severe pain	Very severe pain	Worst possible pain

Where is Your Pain?

Please mark, on the drawings below, the areas where you feel pain. Write "E" if external or "I" if internal near the areas which you mark. Write "EI" if both external and internal.

Neuropathy Pain Scale

Instructions: There are several different aspects of pain which we are interested in measuring: pain **sharpness**, **heat/cold**, **dullness**, **intensity**, overall **unpleasantness**, and **surface vs deep** pain.

The distinction between these aspects of pain might be clearer if you think of taste. For example, people might agree on how *sweet* a piece of pie might be (the *intensity* of the sweetness), but some might enjoy it more if it were sweeter while others might prefer it to be less sweet. Similarly, people can judge the loudness of music and agree on what is more quiet and what is louder, but disagree on how it makes them feel. Some prefer quiet music and some prefer it more loud. In short, the *intensity* of a sensation is not the same as how it makes you feel. A sound might be unpleasant and still be quiet (think of someone grating their fingernails on a chalkboard). A sound can be quiet and "dull" or loud and "dull."

Pain is the same. Many people are able to tell the difference between many aspects of their pain: for example, *how much* it hurts and *how unpleasant* or annoying it is. Although often the intensity of pain has a strong influence on how unpleasant the experience of pain is, some people are able to experience more pain than others before they feel very bad about it.

There are scales for measuring different aspects of pain. For one patient, a pain might feel extremely hot, but not at all dull, while another patient may not experience any heat, but feel like their pain is very dull. We expect you to rate very high on some of the scales below and very low on others. We want you to use the measures that follow to tell us exactly what you experience.

1. Please use the scale below to tell us how **intense** your pain is. Place an "X" through the number that best describes the intensity of your pain.

| No pain | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **intense** pain sensation imaginable |

2. Please use the scale below to tell us how **sharp** your pain feels. Words used to describe "sharp" feelings include "like a knife," "like a spike," "jabbing " or "like jolts."

| Not sharp | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **sharp** sensation imaginable ("like a knife") |

3. Please use the scale below to tell us how **hot** your pain feels. Words used to describe very hot pain include "burning" and "on fire."

| Not hot | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **hot** sensation imaginable ("on fire") |

4. Please use the scale below to tell us how **dull** your pain feels. Words used to describe very dull pain include "like a dull toothache," "dull pain," "aching" and "like a bruise."

| Not dull | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **dull** sensation imaginable |

5. Please use the scale below to tell us how **cold** your pain feels. Words used to describe very cold pain include "like ice" and "freezing."

| Not cold | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **cold** sensation imaginable ("freezing") |

6. Please use the scale below to tell us how **sensitive** your skin is to light touch or clothing. Words used to describe sensitive skin include "like sunburned skin" and "raw skin."

| Not sensitive | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **sensitive** sensation imaginable ("raw skin") |

7. Please use the scale below to tell us how **itchy** your pain feels. Words used to describe itchy pain include "like poison oak" and "like a mosquito bite."

| Not itchy | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **itchy** sensation imaginable ("like poison oak") |

8. Which of the following best describes the **time** quality of your pain? Please check only one answer.

( ) I feel a background pain all of the time and occasional flare-ups (break-through pain) some of the time.

Describe the background pain: _____

Describe the flare-up (break-through) pain: _____

( ) I feel a single type of pain all the time. Describe this pain: _____

( ) I feel a single type of pain only sometimes. Other times, I am pain free.

Describe this occasional pain: _____

9. Now that you have told us the different physical aspects of your pain, the different types of sensations, we want you to tell us overall how **unpleasant** your pain is to you. Words used to describe very unpleasant pain include "miserable" and "intolerable." Remember, pain can have a low intensity, but still feel extremely unpleasant, and some kinds of pain can have a high intensity but be very tolerable. With this scale, please tell us how **unpleasant** your pain feels.

| Not unpleasant | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **unpleasant** sensation imaginable ("intolerable") |

10. Lastly, we want you to give us an estimate of the severity of your deep versus surface pain. We want you to rate each location of pain separately. We realize that it can be difficult to make these estimates, and most likely it will be a "best guess," but please give us your best estimate.

HOW INTENSE IS YOUR *DEEP* PAIN?

| No deep pain | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **intense deep** pain sensation imaginable |

HOW INTENSE IS YOUR *SURFACE* PAIN?

| No surface pain | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | The most **intense surface** pain sensation imaginable |

Descriptor Differential Scale

EACH WORD REPRESENTS AN AMOUNT OF SENSATION.
RATE YOUR SENSATION IN RELATION TO EACH WORD WITH A CHECK MARK.

FAINT
− —————————┆————————— +

MODERATE
− —————————┆————————— +

BARELY STRONG
− —————————┆————————— +

INTENSE
− —————————┆————————— +

WEAK
− —————————┆————————— +

STRONG
− —————————┆————————— +

VERY MILD
− —————————┆————————— +

EXTREMELY INTENSE
− —————————┆————————— +

VERY WEAK
− —————————┆————————— +

SLIGHTLY INTENSE
− —————————┆————————— +

VERY INTENSE
− —————————┆————————— +

MILD
− —————————┆————————— +

REFERENCES

Wong-Baker FACES Rating Scale: From Wong DL, Hackenberry-Eaton M, Wilson D, Winkelstein ML, Schwartz P: *Wong's Essentials of Pediatric Nursing*, 6/e, St. Louis, 2001, P. 1301. Copyrighted by Mosby, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

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Descriptor Differential Scale: From Gracely RH, Kwilosz DM. The descriptor differential scale: applying psychophysical principals to clinical pain assessment. *Pain.* 1988;35:279-288. Reprinted with permission from the International Association for the Study of Pain.