

Parents involvement in their child's pain in hospital

Narrator:

Many children will need to stay in hospital at some point in their lives.

For most, the experience won't have a lasting impact, but for some it can be an anxious time. One reason for this can be unrelieved pain.

We're working with parents, doctors and nurses to improve this.

When a child in hospital has pain, a few things usually need to happen for it to be managed effectively. The child needs to tell someone they have pain that could be their nurse or doctor, parent or carer.

If the nurse or doctor isn't aware of the child's pain, the parent may need to tell them about it. Sometimes parents don't feel comfortable asking a nurse or doctor for pain medication. Parents told us that in this situation they feel nervous or worried about asking for help. They worried about seeming too demanding and some said you need to be confident to approach the nurses and doctors.

Others said they felt lost in hospital and worried they would look foolish if they didn't understand their child's treatment and when their child was in pain. They hesitated to bother nurses and doctors as they are so busy, but we also spoke to parents who approached the nurse or doctor caring for their child and received the help they needed to manage their pain.

These parents described being told by nurses and doctors, You can't bother us too much and if you need anything, just come and get us and this meant they could approach the nurse or doctor who then helped with their child's pain.

We also spoke to nurses and doctors about encourage parents to ask for help. They told us they want to work with parents to manage their child's pain. If they haven't picked up on it, they want parents to tell them. They said parents know their own child best and how they deal with pain.

If you are in hospital with your child and they are in pain, remember the nurse or doctor wants to make your child comfortable. They need to know about it so they can help.

If you are not sure what to say to the nurse or a doctor, you could start with some of the following.

I don't think my child's pain medicine is working properly.

I think my child is still uncomfortable.

I don't know why they are getting pain.

I want to help my child to cope but don't know how.

I don't understand how the medicine is supposed to work.

By working together, nurses, doctors and parents can reduce the number of children who experience pain during a hospital stay.