

Sixteen Tips for Staying Safer in The Context of Pain

1. Have the phone numbers of your doctor's office or advice nurse in your phone for ready access.
2. Choose a few trusted people who know your pain situation and who you can call when it worsens so that you can talk over the situation, they're able to come over and check on you, and they may be able to take you to the doctor. If you are not able to independently call your doctor's office or advice nurse, they are able to do this for you.
3. If you are a parent or caregiver, and you live with pain, make a plan with a trusted friend, family member or neighbor about who can take over for you when it's your turn to receive care.
4. Make dealing with a flare-up of pain easier, try and have what you need on hand, like hot and cold packs, refills of your prescriptions, the over-the-counter medications you take, and the foods you can eat when you feel poorly.
5. Recognize when you shouldn't be driving and you need someone else to drive.
6. If you live far from medical care, make a plan with friends, neighbors or family about how you will get to medical care when it's urgent. Having this plan is one less worry.
7. Get comfortable with the idea of using ambulance services if you need them. It's important to be able to recognize a crisis when it is one.

8. There are medication bottles that will keep track of “time since last opened” for you. This will help with safer usage. It’s easy to lose track when you’re in intense pain and not sleeping well. There are many sold online, look for “*time since last opened pill bottle.*”
9. Try and keep nutritious foods around for when you’re in pain. Your body still needs good food and you still need to keep hydrated.
10. Try and keep a list of all your medications and supplements you take so that your physician can check to see if there is a negative interaction between medications or some better treatment for you. Take this list with dosages to your next doctor’s appointment, or simply take all of your medications, including supplements with you.
11. If there are instructions that go with your medication, such as when to take it, or taking it with food, keep those instructions and make sure you’re following the directions. It’s easy to forget the instructions when different medications have different instructions. It’s a lot to remember.
12. Always try and get the medication or medical instructions in the language you read and understand. If you have someone taking care of you, also make sure those instructions are in a language that that person reads and understands.
13. If you have vision problems and need to hear instructions, *Be My Eyes* is a service that will help the vision impaired for free. They have an AI powered app, they also have volunteers who are available to provide their eyesight day or night: <https://www.bemyeyes.com/>
14. If you’re planning a trip big or small, let trusted people know your plans.

15. There are fires, floods, and other disasters. Make sure you are able to receive those alerts for your area and if you don't drive or have mobility issues, make a plan with neighbors should you need help or evacuation is needed.

16. Talk over with your doctor when the pain situation needs you to get in touch. This would be things like:

- The pain is worse than it is typically
- The pain is somehow different than it typically is for you, perhaps it's in a different place, or it feels somehow different
- The pain is lasting longer than it typically does
- You are tempted to use more medication than is safe or recommended
- You're having a hard time doing ordinary things like getting around your house, getting to the bathroom, making simple foods, and getting sleep
- The intensity or duration of pain has brought about feelings such as hopelessness, fear, feeling doomed, suicidal, very worried, and/or reckless with your medication
- The pain is keeping you from eating or drinking enough
- There are new issues emerging, you're dizzy, vomiting, etc.
- You feel your situation is worsening or changing in some way, even if you don't have words for it