

# PAIN MANAGEMENT AT HOME FOR CHILDREN WITH RHEUMATOLOGIC DISORDERS



## **RELAXATION TECHNIQUES CAN ALSO BE HELPFUL:**

Start with a quiet environment free of noise and distractions.

Slow deliberate breathing with parent can help an older child calm down and start to relax.

Commonly preferred calming sounds include waves, water or soft music. The volume of the calming sounds should be low. Young children are often comforted by listening to parents quietly singing children's songs.

Gentle massage to the area of discomfort can be helpful, however some children do not like painful areas to be touched so only perform massage if your child does not mind you touching the areas that hurt. Usually, children with hot swollen joints prefer not to have them touched.

## **HOW TO MANAGE PAIN AT HOME FOR CHILDREN BEFORE A RHEUMATOLOGY DIAGNOSIS IS MADE:**

Typically children with pain due to a variety of rheumatologic disorders will find these methods helpful. However, they may only be a temporary solution to your child's discomfort until a diagnosis and proper treatment is initiated.

Tylenol is usually the first drug for discomfort and if your doctor says your child's liver and kidneys are healthy an over the counter NSAID can be used. Some over the counter NSAIDs are Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or naproxen (Aleve). Frequency and doses should be according to the bottle recommendations for your child's weight/age.

Cold compresses and massage to head are often helpful for bad headaches.

Joint and muscle pain is often soothed by warmth. Warm showers, tub baths or swimming in a heated pool can be soothing to inflamed joints. Swimming and playing in a warm pool will also encourage movement of all joints. It is like home physical therapy which is always good for children with arthritis. Hot tubs or Jacuzzis are only to be used with pre-teen and teens due to the higher temperatures that are commonly used and the potential for dehydration from perspiring while in the tub.

***CHILDREN MUST BE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES WHEN IN BATHTUBS, SWIMMING POOLS OR JACUZZI/HOT TUBS.***

Warm water soaks just for hands, feet and ankles are also soothing to sore joints. You can use a home foot spa if you have one or just use a dishpan. Heating pads and heated blankets can provide some relief. However only low settings should be used with children to prevent burns.

***PARENTS MUST SUPERVISE USE OF THESE HEATED DEVICES, FREQUENTLY CHECK SKIN FOR ANY REDNESS AND STOP USING IF REDNESS DEVELOPS.***