Decrease Symptoms of Pain
Leadership Fact Sheet
December 28, 2016

This fact sheet is about decreasing moderate to severe pain.

Why is reducing pain important?

Pain management means that nursing homes will implement a comprehensive system to address issues related to pain. It involves assessing and managing pain in residents, both long and short term, so that all residents have individualized, person centered care plans. Nursing home residents will receive appropriate care to prevent and minimize episodes of moderate to severe pain. Less than adequate pain management can affect residents’ daily activities and quality of life. It can also cause depression, sleeplessness, restlessness, or decline in appetite and unintentional weight loss.

How does pain management benefit nursing homes?

- Nursing homes have satisfied residents and families, which translates into better care and image in the community.
- Nursing homes have improved quality measures due to improved resident care and satisfaction results.

How can nursing home leadership improve pain management?

- Provide educational opportunities for all staff regarding pain assessment and pain management.
- Provide educational opportunities regarding nonverbal signs of pain, especially in residents with dementia.
- Provide ongoing educational programs regarding pain assessment and treatment for clinical staff.
- Encourage non-pharmacological interventions to manage pain.
- Provide education for residents and families regarding pain assessment and management and the quality improvement program you’ve put in place.
- Promote communication and teamwork among all levels of staff.
- Recognize staff who excel at pain assessment and management.
- Recognize staff who excel at communication and teamwork to improve quality of care.
- Generate excitement about pain assessment and management (team competitions, prizes for innovation, staff recognition, etc.).