

Pain Management: Essential Mnemonics for Nursing Care

Welcome to this comprehensive guide on pain management mnemonics for nursing care. Throughout this presentation, we'll explore various types of pain, their assessment techniques, and effective interventions using easy-to-remember mnemonics that will enhance your clinical practice.

These evidence-based approaches will help you provide better care for patients experiencing different types of pain, from postoperative discomfort to chronic conditions like migraines and neuropathy.

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Postoperative Pain Management



Assess pain

Use the pain scale (0-10), monitor vital signs, and assess the surgical site



Believe the patient's report

Trust what patients tell you about their pain experience



Choose appropriate pain control options

Select from opioids, NSAIDs, and non-pharmacological interventions



Deliver interventions promptly

Provide timely administration of prescribed analgesics

Remember the **ABCDE** mnemonic when managing postoperative pain. Watch for signs like guarding, grimacing, increased heart rate, and elevated blood pressure. Encourage deep breathing and relaxation techniques alongside medication administration.



Chronic Pain Management for Arthritis



The **ARTS** mnemonic helps address chronic pain conditions like arthritis. Patients typically present with continuous dull or aching pain, stiffness, fatigue, and depression. Provide non-pharmacologic interventions such as heat therapy and relaxation exercises while encouraging activity modification.

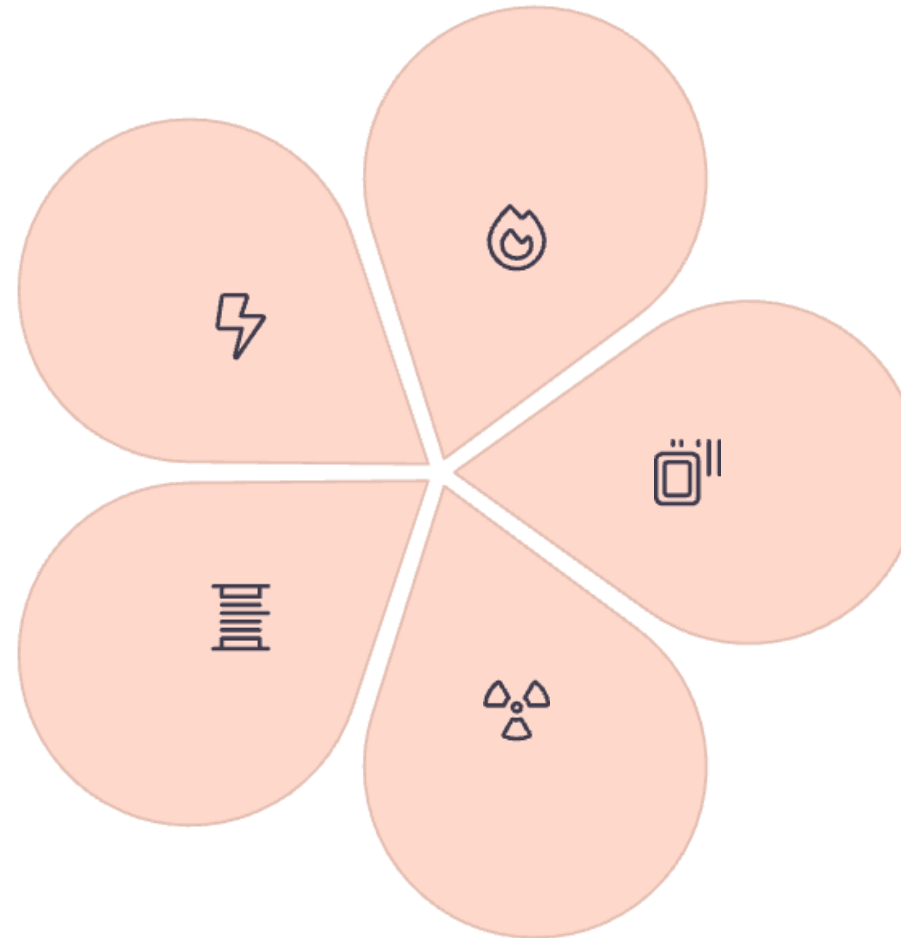
Neuropathic Pain Management

Shooting pain

Sudden, intense pain that travels along nerve pathways

Pins and needles

Tingling sensations common in neuropathic conditions



Hyperalgesia

Increased sensitivity to painful stimuli

Allodynia

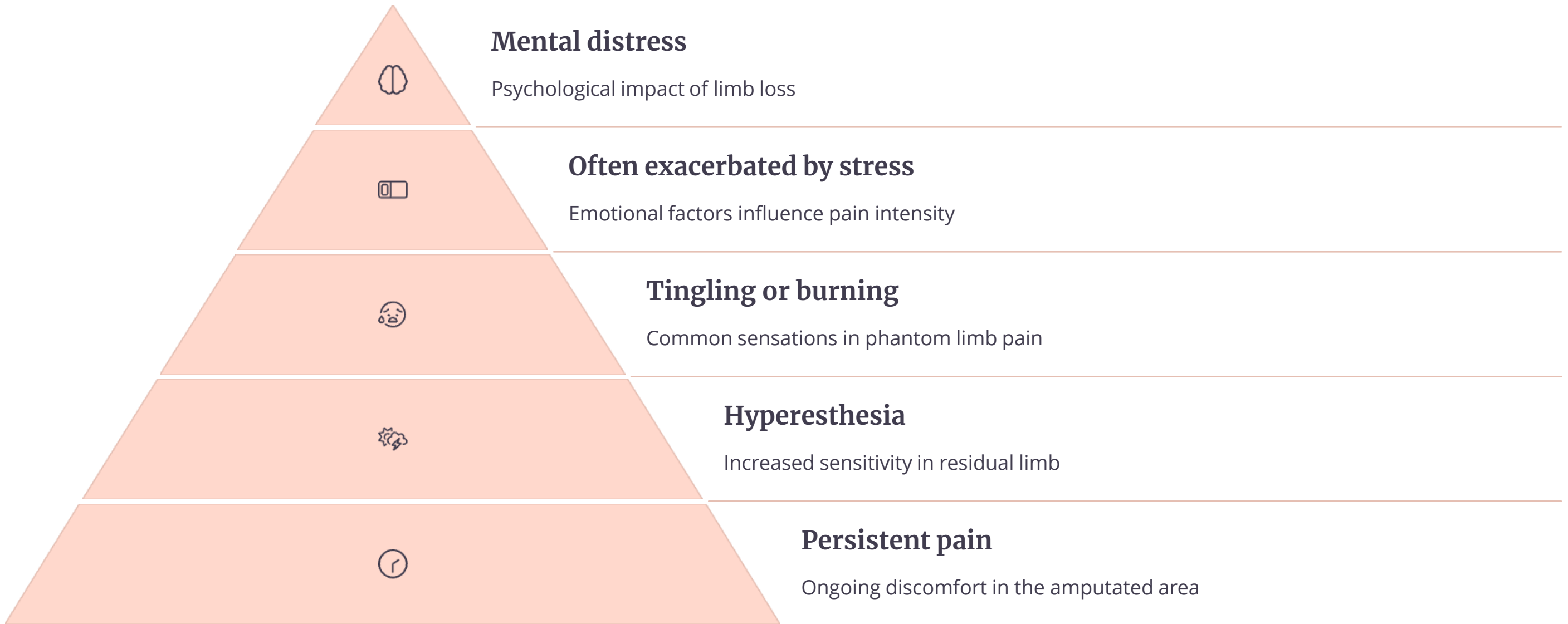
Pain from non-painful stimuli like light touch

Radiating pain

Pain that spreads from its source to surrounding areas

Use the **SHARP** mnemonic when assessing diabetic neuropathy and other neuropathic pain conditions. Perform a thorough neurological assessment, evaluate pain intensity, and identify functional limitations. Treatment typically includes medications like gabapentin, physical therapy, and TENS units.

Phantom Limb Pain Management



The **PHANTOM** mnemonic helps identify key characteristics of phantom limb pain. Assess pain intensity, duration, and psychological impact. Interventions include administering analgesics, implementing mirror therapy, and providing emotional support. Treatment options include opioids, antidepressants, anticonvulsants, and physical therapy.

Cancer Pain Management

Persistent or severe pain

Cancer pain often presents as constant discomfort that significantly impacts quality of life, requiring around-the-clock management strategies.

Affects sleep and function

Pain disrupts normal sleep patterns and daily activities, leading to fatigue, decreased mobility, and psychological distress.

Intensity varies

Pain may present as sharp, dull, aching, or burning sensations that can change in character and severity throughout the disease progression.

Neuropathic or nociceptive

Cancer pain may stem from nerve damage or tissue injury, requiring different treatment approaches based on the underlying mechanism.

Remember the **PAINS** mnemonic when managing cancer pain. Conduct a comprehensive assessment including severity, onset, and triggers. Administer long-acting opioids with immediate-release medications for breakthrough pain, while educating patients on side effect management.



Musculoskeletal Pain Management

Position changes

Encourage patients to change positions frequently to relieve pressure and reduce muscle tension, particularly important for low back pain.

The **PAIN RELIEF** mnemonic guides interventions for musculoskeletal conditions like low back pain. Assess posture, muscle strength, and gait using appropriate pain scales. Encourage ambulation, administer muscle relaxants or NSAIDs, and apply heat therapy as indicated.

Application of heat or cold

Apply heat to relax muscles and improve blood flow, or cold therapy to reduce inflammation and numb the painful area.

Increase movement as tolerated

Gradually introduce gentle exercises and stretching to maintain mobility and prevent stiffness.

NSAIDs

Administer non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to reduce inflammation and alleviate pain when appropriate.



Acute Pain Management for Appendicitis



Restlessness

Inability to find a comfortable position due to severe pain



Abdominal guarding

Involuntary muscle tensing when the abdomen is palpated



Pain increases with movement

Worsening discomfort with walking or changing positions

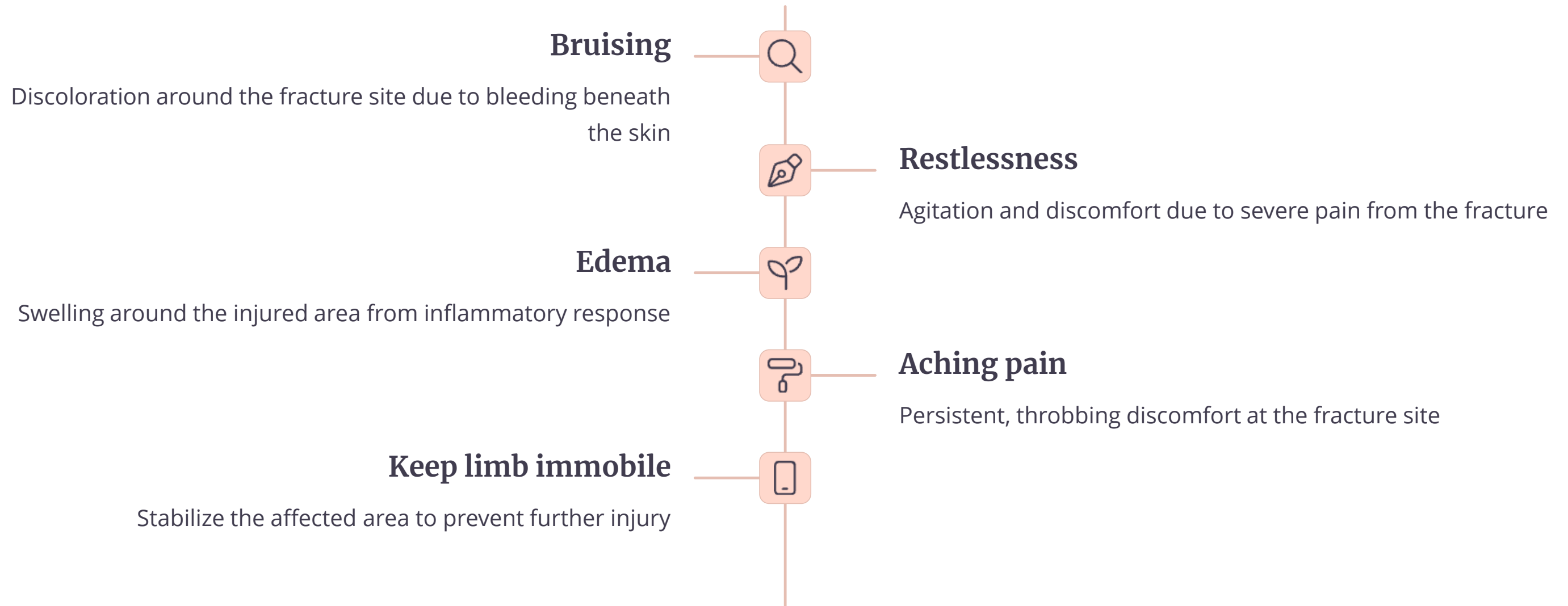


Immediate intervention needed

Requires prompt medical attention to prevent complications

Use the **RAPID** mnemonic when assessing acute conditions like appendicitis. Patients typically present with sharp, localized abdominal pain, nausea, fever, and rebound tenderness. Assess pain location, intensity, and associated symptoms such as vomiting. Administer analgesics as ordered, position for comfort, and monitor for signs of rupture.

Bone Pain Management for Fractures



The **BREAK** mnemonic helps identify and manage bone fractures. Assess for deformity, swelling, and limited range of motion. Immobilize the affected limb, apply ice, elevate, and administer appropriate analgesics. Treatment typically includes NSAIDs or opioids, splinting or casting, and rest.

Post-Operative Abdominal Pain Management



Position for comfort

Find optimal positioning to minimize pain



Assess pain regularly

Monitor pain levels and response to interventions



Include patient in care plan

Engage patients in decision-making process



Non-pharmacologic interventions

Implement complementary pain relief strategies

Remember the **PAIN CARE** mnemonic for post-operative abdominal pain. Monitor vital signs, incision site, and bowel sounds. Administer pain medications (opioids or NSAIDs) and encourage ambulation, deep breathing exercises, and proper positioning. Treatment options include PCA, oral pain medications, and heat/cold therapy.

Migraine Headache Management

1

Hypersensitivity to light

Photophobia requiring dark, quiet environment

2

Extreme throbbing pain

Pulsating headache often on one side

3

Aura

Visual disturbances preceding headache

4

Dizziness or nausea

Common accompanying symptoms

The **HEADS** mnemonic helps identify and manage migraine headaches. Monitor headache characteristics including location and intensity, and assess potential triggers. Administer prescribed triptans or NSAIDs and provide a quiet, dark environment. Treatment options include analgesics, antiemetics, and preventive medications such as beta-blockers.

