

What are the current summary treatment guidelines for the treatment of cancer pain?

The following table provides information regarding several published guidelines for the treatment of cancer-related pain. For each guideline, the citation and involved organization are provided, along with selected information regarding the content of the guideline pertaining to pain management. The focus is the care of adult patients with cancer.

Table 1: Treatment guidelines for cancer pain.

Organization/Year	Comments
National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) ¹ 2017	<p>This guideline includes algorithms for the management of pain in patients who are opioid-naïve as well as patients who are opioid-tolerant. General information for management of pain in patients with all levels of pain is included, in addition to more specific algorithms for pain of specific levels of intensity: severe (pain 7-10), moderate (pain 4-6), or mild (pain 1-3).</p> <p>Pain assessment is also covered, including pain assessment tools. Management of neuropathic pain is included, as is information on psychosocial support and patient and family education.</p> <p>Also includes information regarding non-opioid pharmacologic modalities and interventions for cancer pain syndromes and provides a great deal of information on the prescribing of opioid medications.</p>
World Health Organization (WHO) ² 2012	<p>Guidelines are in development. A “Scoping Document for WHO Guidelines for the pharmacological treatment of persisting pain in adults with medical illnesses” has been approved.</p>
American Society of Clinical Oncology ³ 2016	<p>This evidence-based guideline focuses on management of chronic pain in the cancer survivor; the target population is any adult diagnosed with cancer who has pain lasting ≥ 3 months, no matter what the cause.</p> <p>The guideline includes recommendations for patient screening and assessment; treatment and care options; and risk assessment, mitigation, and universal precautions with opioid use.</p> <p>A table of “The Bottom Line” recommendations for all 3 of these sections is included at the beginning of the paper.</p> <p>The “Treatment and Care Options” section includes recommendations for non-pharmacologic as well as pharmacologic treatment. The sections on pharmacologic treatment include material and recommendations for both non-opioid and opioid options.</p>
European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) ⁴	<p>This guideline includes information on the following topics: incidence of pain, assessment of patients with pain, principles of pain management, pain management, treatment of mild-moderate pain, treatment of moderate-</p>

Organization/Year	Comments
2012	severe pain, scheduling and titration, management of opioid side effects, radiotherapy, bisphosphonates and bone pain, treatment of resistant and neuropathic pain, and refractory pain at the end of life.
Change Pain Latin America ⁵ 2015	These guidelines are from an expert panel from Change Pain Latin America from 2015. They include recommendations for opioid-naïve and opioid-tolerant patients. Information regarding opioid rotation and adjuvant analgesics is also included. In addition, tables of conversion factors for opioids are part of the guidelines.
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) ⁶ 2016	This summary guideline is meant for non-specialist healthcare professionals starting “strong opioids for pain in adults with advanced and progressive disease.” Specific recommendations for pain management are included, along with recommendations regarding the management of adverse events of opioid treatment. The full guideline can be found at https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg140/evidence .
Health Service Executive (HSE)/Royal College of Physicians (RCPI) National Clinical Programme for Palliative Care ⁷ 2015	The guideline includes sections on principles of pain management, including pain assessment. Information on use of opioids is also included, along with use of non-opioid pharmacological management. In addition, there are sections on the use of opioids in patients with renal impairment and in patients with hepatic impairment. There is also a brief section on non-pharmacological approaches to the management of cancer pain.
American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP) ⁸ 2013	This guideline provides recommendations on the management of pain and other symptoms in patients with lung cancer. Recommendations for the palliation of bone or brain metastasis are included, in addition to management of other potential issues related to lung cancer.
BC Cancer Agency ⁹ 2017	This guideline provides recommendations for the management of pain associated with cancer, as well as other symptoms of advanced disease in adult patients. A pain management algorithm is included, as is an equianalgesic conversion chart for morphine.

References

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