

5 Pain

LANGUAGE

1 Grammar

Choose the correct option to complete the sentences.

- 1 A fracture is *least serious* / *painful* / *less serious* than a break.
- 2 My rash is *more itchy* / *red* / *itchier* today than yesterday.
- 3 Do kidney stones hurt *more* / *most* / *least* than childbirth?
- 4 You look much *best* / *better* / *good* today?
- 5 A migraine is the *most* / *least* / *more* severe headache you can have.
- 6 Operations are *most successful* / *successful* / *more successful* these days than before.
- 7 *Less* / *Least* / *Most* illnesses are curable, if treated early.
- 8 This medication will make you feel less *painful* / *pain* / *dull* in your arm.

2 Key words from the unit

Complete the sentences with the words from the list.

- 1 _____ is often given during labour.
- 2 A _____ is a severe headache.
- 3 Hypnosis is an alternative form of _____.
- 4 _____ or slight pain is not severe.
- 5 Local _____ are often given for operations.
- 6 He has a pain in the chest when he _____.
- 7 The terrible pain her arm is _____.
- 8 Women feel _____ after giving birth.

migraine
mild
sore
anaesthetics
coughs
gas and air
agonizing
pain relief

READING AND VOCABULARY

Pain is important because it tells us that we are injured or ill. However, we don't all feel pain in the same way. Researchers are trying to learn more about this fact. Their experiments show that children are more sensitive to pain than adults, and that men can tolerate more pain than women.

Pain is also difficult to measure and describe. This is a problem because it is an important symptom and medics (medical staff) need information from patients about it. It is therefore common practice to give patients lists of words and ask them to say which words best describe three things: the type of pain they are suffering, its intensity (how bad it is) and its frequency (how often they feel it).

With some patients, such as children, words don't work very well to describe intensity, so medics use smiley faces or sometimes colours. For example, blues mean a mild pain and reds mean severe pain. Some medics prefer a range of numbers; 0 is no pain and 10 is unbearable pain.

Pain does not always show where an injury is. Internal organs, for example, do not have many pain-receiving nerve endings, so internal injuries often cause pain in a different part of the body. This is called 'referred pain'. One example of referred pain is when someone suffering a heart attack feels pain in their left shoulder, arm or hand.

3 Comprehension

Use the information in the text to complete the sentences with a, b or c.

- 1 Researchers are trying to find out why _____.
 - a people experience pain differently.
 - b people feel pain.
 - c pain is important to people.
- 2 Experiments show that _____.
 - a pain is worse for men than women.
 - b men can take more pain than women.
 - c children feel less pain than adults.
- 3 Nurses need to measure a patient's pain because _____.
 - a pain is a problem.
 - b pain is a symptom.
 - c patients can't describe it.
- 4 Medics ask patients for a number to describe _____.
 - a the kind of pain they have.
 - b how bad the pain is.
 - c how often they're in pain.
- 5 To describe pain, medics ask children to _____.
 - a point to a smiley face.
 - b think of some numbers.
 - c say how it feels.
- 6 You experience referred pain _____.
 - a only in your internal organs.
 - b long after an injury.
 - c in a different place from an injury.

4 Vocabulary

Write 'F' next to the sentences which are about *frequency* of pain.

Write 'T' next to the sentences which describe *types* of pain (T).

- 1 He says his toe is throbbing. _____
- 2 It's wearing off now and it's just an occasional ache. _____
- 3 The shooting pains are getting worse. _____
- 4 He complains of frequent headaches. _____
- 5 She has a stabbing pain in her side. _____
- 6 She was in constant pain, but now it's gone. _____

5 Further vocabulary practice

Give these patients' pain a score from 1 to 6. 1 is the lowest pain, 6 is most severe.

- a 'It's moderately painful when you touch it.' _____
- b 'It's agonizing, I can't bear it.' _____
- c 'There is a very mild pain when I move.' _____
- d 'It feels very sore.' _____
- e 'There's a severe stabbing pain in my head.' _____
- f 'It's not bad today, thank you.' _____

