

([Oakes, 2011](#)).

The most important aspect of pain assessment for children with chronic illness, particularly those with complex pain, is the relationship that develops between the child and the family. This relationship offers health care providers a sense of what the pain experience means to the child and family. The pain experience can interfere with the child's ability to eat, sleep, and perform daily activities and routines and may be complicated by side effects of medical treatments, and complications associated with disease management.

Other important components of assessment include the onset of pain; pain duration or pattern; the effectiveness of the current treatment; factors that aggravate or relieve the pain; other symptoms and complications concurrently felt; and interference with the child's mood, function, and interactions with family ([Pasero and McCaffrey, 2011](#)). In addition to asking the child or parent when the pain started and how long the pain lasts, the nurse can assess variations and rhythms by asking whether the pain is better or worse at certain times of the day or night. If the child has had pain for a while, the child or parent may know which medications and doses are helpful. They may also have found some nonpharmacologic methods that have helped. The nurse may ask the child or parent to keep a diary of activities, positions, and other events that may increase or decrease the pain. Pain may be accompanied by other symptoms (such as nausea and poor appetite), and it may interfere with sleep and other activities. A diary can help families identify triggers that may cause pain and interventions that work.

Other aspects warranting careful assessment that may pose barriers to effective management include family issues and relationships, fears and concerns about addictions the clinician's and family's lack of knowledge about pain, inappropriate use of pain medications, ineffective management of adverse effects from medications, and the use of different pain management modalities.

## **Pain Management**

Children may experience pain as a result of surgery, injuries, acute and chronic illnesses, and medical or surgical procedures.