

Chronic Pain

Pain that comes on suddenly and lasts for a little bit of time is called acute pain. Pain that lasts for 6 months or longer is called chronic pain. Chronic pain can be caused by many different things. You may have had an injury in the past, may overuse a joint and this has caused pain, or may have a larger underlying medical condition.

Signs you may have chronic pain

- Headaches that won't go away.
- Pain interferes with work.
- Can't do fun activities you used to be able to do.
- Pain does not go away when you rest.

Why does my pain not go away?

Once pain starts and does not get treated, the nerves in our body send stronger signals causing the pain to feel worse. Over time, your brain gets used to that signal so the pain feels worse even though the injury isn't.

What do I do if I have chronic pain?

If you think you may have chronic pain, first you want to talk to your medical professional. They can help you decide what the best way to treat it is and help you determine what is causing the pain.

There are ways to treat chronic pain

The goal for treating pain is to help you return to normal activities comfortably. There are things you can do that may help that.

- Stay active and do not let the pain take over your life. Know what your limits are physically.
- Exercise and stretch. Do low impact moves that will help you stay fit.
- Try yoga, swimming and walking.
- Meditate, use relaxation breathing and keep stress low.
- Use distraction when you find the pain flaring. Talk to a friend, watch a movie or do a hobby.
- Engage in things that you enjoy and lift your mood.
- Use positive thoughts and stay hopeful.
- See a therapist or psychologist to learn ways to cope with the pain and work on building more positive thoughts.

There may be medication that can help

See your health care provider regarding medication. There are different types of medication that are used to treat pain. Be sure to talk to your health care provider about all the options. Ask about risk factors, long term effects of the medication, and risk of addiction.