

Managing Chronic Pain

Tips to Help Keep Your Health On Track!

Many of us have encountered some type of pain where managing it can be frustrating. Pain can attack anywhere – the joints, muscles, or bones. Acute pain, usually the result of an injury or illness, can hit at any time, last as little as a moment, and then never happen again. Acute pain generally disappears in less than six months once the underlying cause of the pain is identified and treated. Chronic pain, which can also be caused by an injury or illness, usually lasts for long periods of time and does not respond to most medical treatments. However, chronic pain is not always associated with a direct physical cause, so those who suffer from it may also face other health issues, such as a lack of energy, changes in their appetite, and emotional issues. ⁽¹⁾

What causes chronic pain?

Many times no clear identifiable cause can be linked to chronic pain, which makes it even more difficult to manage, but there are several factors which may contribute to it, such as: ⁽¹⁾

- Back pain
- Rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis
- Fibromyalgia
- Cancer
- Stomach ulcers
- Gallbladder disease

What are some of the more common symptoms of chronic pain?

Although chronic pain can appear at any time with no known cause, there are some common symptoms, such as: ⁽¹⁾

- Any type of pain that does not go away when you would expect
- Pain that is aching, sharp, burning, or electrical
- Soreness, stiffness, or tightness in the muscles or joints

Can chronic pain be prevented?

Chronic pain can be hard to treat, thereby impacting the quality of your life. Sometimes it may take a team of doctors working together to address all of the issues of your chronic pain. Use the check list below to determine if you should consider reaching out to your doctor. ⁽¹⁾

- You have had pain for more than three months with no clear reason why
- Your pain affects your sleeping habits
- You had an injury or illness which healed, yet you still have lingering pain
- You feel depressed and withdraw from normal activities due to the chronic pain

What are some tips for managing chronic pain?

Living every day with chronic pain is not easy. By learning some of the techniques outlined below, you may better manage your chronic pain, thereby improving your quality of life. ⁽¹⁾

- Start tracking your pain level and activities every day
- Eat a healthier diet in order to prevent other health issues from cropping up
- Try deep breathing or meditation techniques to help you relax
- Reduce the stress in your life where you can
- Exercise to release natural endorphins which may help improve your mood and boost pain relief
- Join a support group to meet others who suffer from chronic pain
- Reduce your alcohol intake as it can worsen sleep problems
- Quit smoking since smoking may intensify chronic pain
- Consider a massage or biofeedback to help reduce migraines, headaches, tension, and stress
- Find an activity to help keep you busy and to distract you from your chronic pain

What resources or support are available for chronic pain?

Speak to your doctor about any concerns you may have regarding chronic pain. Your doctor should be able to provide you with resources and support which you may find useful in managing your chronic pain. Your medical plan also has wellness coaches and registered nurses who can help you with any questions you may have through Railroad HealthLink, anytime, 24/7 at 1-866-735-5685.

⁽¹⁾ www.webmd.com

This is informational only, not a replacement for the medical advice of your physician.
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