

What is Chronic Pain?

- Chronic or persistent pain is pain you have been experiencing for 3-6 months or more. Chronic pain can interfere with daily activities, reduce your attention, affect sleep, and reduce quality of life. Pain is a normal experience and acts as our body's alarm system. Many areas in the brain are involved in perceiving pain, making each person's pain experience different. Chronic pain creates changes in the brain, meaning pain is more complex than just the actual injury or tissue damage.

Chronic Pain and Mental Health

- Chronic pain and mental health impact each other. Chronic pain often exists with post-traumatic stress, depression, or other psychological conditions. Living with post-traumatic stress or depression may worsen chronic pain. Living with chronic pain is a stressor itself, and pain may limit the ability to engage in previously enjoyed activities. In this way, pain can affect mood and quality of life.

Chronic Pain and Substance Misuse

- Many people with chronic pain may use prescription medication to reduce symptoms. Studies have shown that people with both chronic pain and other psychological conditions were more likely to be prescribed opioid pain medications. These individuals may be more likely to use medications in a risky way (for example, not taking it as prescribed). Make sure you tell your treatment provider all the prescription and over the counter medications you are taking. Let your provider know if:
 - You are using more pain medication than prescribed
 - You are combining pain medications
 - Your pain is not improved despite using pain medications

Managing Your Pain at Home

- Finding a balance between avoiding activity and overdoing is important to your recovery. It is okay to feel a little sore after activity, but not to the point where your pain prevents you from going about your day. Your care team can help you find ways to pace your activities. Some helpful tools for pain management may include:
 - Correct Posture
 - Supportive Sleeping Positions
 - Use of Heat (heating pad, hot showers, etc.) and/or Cold (ice pack, ice massage etc.)
 - Massage Techniques
 - Pacing yourself
 - Exercise (ask your provider for recommendations)
 - Staying Active
 - Healthy Diet and Lifestyle
 - Relaxation or Meditation Strategies
 - Cognitive Behavior Therapy





Additional Comments:

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