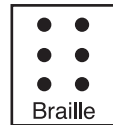


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Patient Information
and Guidance
Chronic Pain





Some important Facts

Pain becomes persistent when your processing systems in your body become altered. This often means that scans and x-rays often do not highlight a specific cause and even if the cause of pain is discovered and treated the chronic pain doesn't easily go away. This same process also explains why an area of the body can remain painful and tender even after the tissue healing processes are completed. It is common for this type of pain to vary from day to day without any warning.

Often you may receive conflicting advice on how best to deal with it.

How can I help myself?

Medication

Regular medication can help ease the pain and your doctor will be able to advise you on this. Unfortunately it can sometimes be a bit of a struggle finding the right medication to suit you. It is a common misconception that taking regular painkillers will mask pain and make you more vulnerable to damage - this is not the case. If painkillers help ease your pain you should be able to be slightly more active which will reduce your risk of long term disability.

This information is for those who have Chronic Pain. This information and guidance leaflet gives you the best and most up to date advice on what to expect and how to manage it.

What is chronic pain?

Chronic pain is pain which lasts longer than 3 months. The actual cause of your pain may be unknown; perhaps it started gradually or was a sudden onset by some emotional or traumatic event in the past.



Exercise

Chronic pain can often be made worse by movement so it can be tempting to rest too much. While this may help ease pain in the short term, in the long run it can lead to weak muscles and stiff joints and disability. It is important that you keep gently active on a regular basis. Physiotherapy can be helpful to advise you on a range of exercises and how to go about them without flaring up your pain.

Relaxation

Pain makes our muscles tense up which can then cause further pain. It is helpful to use regular relaxation techniques to reduce the risk of this.

Pacing activity

People who suffer with chronic pain often find some days are much worse than others which can leave you feeling out of control. Sometimes this can happen for no reason at all but often it happens because they have been a bit too active on a "good" day which causes an increase in pain for a few hours or days after. To reduce the risk of these "flare ups" it can be helpful to "pace" activity i.e. Break up activities with regular rest periods and don't push yourself too hard on a good day.