

WHAT IS PAIN?

Pain is an unpleasant sensation or emotional experience. It is not necessarily bad, it is our body's way of telling us what it needs. Pain can be challenging when it becomes chronic. The good news is there are many ways to cope with pain.

What options can help me cope with chronic pain?

- Getting enough sleep
- Creating downtime in your schedule
- Realizing when to say "no"
- Engaging in activities that bring you joy, such as volunteering, hobbies, etc.
- Counseling
- Stress/relaxation techniques:
 - » Yoga
 - » Massage
 - » Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Prayer

Chronic Pain PATH

(Personal Action Toward Health)

Chronic Pain PATH is a 6-week workshop that teaches effective tools to participants to better self-manage their condition and its impact on their life. Contact Tri-County Office on Aging at 517-887-1440 for more information.

www.tcoa.org/classesevidence-based-programs

This brochure was developed in partnership with the Capital Area Health Alliance, Ingham Opioid Abuse Prevention Initiative, Tri-County Office on Aging, and Barry-Eaton District Health Department.

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Thank you to Dr. Narasimha Gundamraj, MD of the Pain Management Center of Lansing and Sparrow Pain Management Center for his expertise and input in creating this resource.



CHRONIC PAIN AFFECTS MILLIONS OF PEOPLE. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is chronic pain?

Any pain lasting more than 3 months or remaining after an injury is healed is called chronic pain. Some chronic pain conditions include headaches, arthritis, back/neck pain, cancer pain, fibromyalgia, nerve pain, stomach/pelvic pain, and pain due to shingles. You can prevent your pain from becoming chronic by taking care of it in the beginning stages by following your healthcare provider's advice.

What kind of medications are used to treat pain?

Over the counter pain medications, prescription anti-inflammatory medications, opioids, muscle relaxants, and other medications can be used to treat pain.



Ask your healthcare provider for non-opioid and non-habit forming pain management options. Don't be afraid to talk to them if you are already using opioids and you think you can't stop.

Can medications be habit forming?

Some pain medications like opioids are habit forming. Examples of opioids include Hydrocodone, Vicodin, Norco, and Oxycodone. Try non-opioids first. Taking opioids for more than just 7 to 10 days may be habit forming.

Are opioids bad?

Opioids are very powerful medications. They can be helpful or harmful depending on how they are prescribed and used. Long-term use can change the way your body feels pain and might make the pain feel worse. Over time the dosage may not provide the same pain relief it once did.



Safe use of medications requires locking them up, not sharing with others, and safely disposing of them when no longer needed. Learn more at http://www.takebackmeds.org.

What kind of treatments might be offered for my pain?

It depends on the type of pain you have. Options may include medications, injections, physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychotherapy, physical activity/exercise, and diet changes.

What is physical therapy?

Physical therapy (PT) includes patient education, flexibility, strengthening, stability, balance, and home exercises. Heat, cold, electric stimulation, aquatic therapy, traction, and taping can also be used.



Physical therapy and exercise can help you get back to your life.

Why is exercise helpful in managing chronic pain?

Chronic pain can make you inactive and that can worsen pain. Exercise produces natural pain killing substances in the body, such as endorphins.

How can I manage pain at work?

Ask your employer if any accommodations can be made for you. These can include changes in the type of duties performed, hours, break times, seating, or use of other assist devices.

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- Take time to care for yourself.
- Try writing down your thoughts and feelings.
- Talk to your family and friends who support you and may help you cope with pain.
- Be motivated to take control of your pain.
- There are effective treatments available to help you.