

Information Resources

- > **Managing Pain Before it Manages You.** Margaret Caudhill, 1995.
- > **Explain Pain.** David Butler, Lorimer Moseley, 2003.
- > **Pain.** Patrick Wall, 1999.

Internet Resources

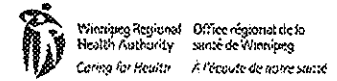
- > The Canadian Pain Society. www.canadianpainsociety.ca
- > The Canadian Pain Coalition. www.canadianpaincoalition.ca
- > Pain Care. www.paincare.ca
- > The Canadian Psychological Association
www.cpa.ca/publications/yourhealthpsychologyworksheetsheets
www.panamclinic.org/painclinic.asp

Support Groups and Other Community Resources

- > The Fibromyalgia Support Group
Phone: 204-975-3037 www.fmswinnipeg.com
- > Arthritis society - www.arthritis.ca
- > Headache Network - www.headachenetwork.ca
- > City of Winnipeg Leisure Guide - www.leisureonline.ca
or call your local pool
- > Dystonia chapter and support group on Manitoba
Phone: 204-772-1411 www.dystonia-foundation.org
- > Get Better Together - www.wellnessinstitute.ca
Phone: 204-632-3927

Acknowledgements:

The Calgary Health Region. Managing Chronic Pain: A Patient Handbook



Managing Chronic Pain: A Patient Information Guide

Please visit our website:

<http://www.panamclinic.org/painclinic.asp>

Management of Chronic Pain

There are many ways to manage chronic pain. These range from various treatments you may undergo, called “Passive Approaches” or things that you learn to do for yourself, called “Active Approaches”. Combining these treatment approaches will work to give you the best pain management and help you to break out of the chronic pain cycle.

Passive Approaches to manage pain include:

- Medication;
- Procedures such as surgery and other intervention;
- Hands on therapy, such as massage or manipulation.

Active Approaches to manage pain include:

- Exercise;
- Pacing;
- Relaxation exercises;
- Effective communication with your medical team and others;
- Lifestyle changes such as a healthy diet, proper sleep and hygiene;
- Asking for help when you need it;
- Attending to your other health care issues;
- Practice learned coping skills.

Pain Medication and Addiction

Myth: All opiate or narcotic medication leads to addiction.

Fact: Only a small number of people become addicted to these medications used for pain management.

What is Chronic Pain?

Chronic Pain is defined as an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience, which is ongoing and lasts for more than 3-6 months. The source of pain may or may not be known. Each person has different circumstances that make their pain experience unique; identifying the cause of the pain, how the pain is affecting your life, and how long the pain has lasted.

Program Objectives

Our goal at the Pan Am Pain Clinic is to work with you to achieve your goals and develop an active approach to manage your pain. Our team will provide you with education and support to improve your quality of life. We will work with you and your family doctor to define a treatment plan and resources to help you manage your painful condition.

What are the causes of chronic pain?

Trauma or injury, diseases or it may not be known.

What are the sources of chronic pain?

Pain can come from your muscles, nerves, organs in your body, bones and joints or from poor circulation.

What are some words used to describe pain?

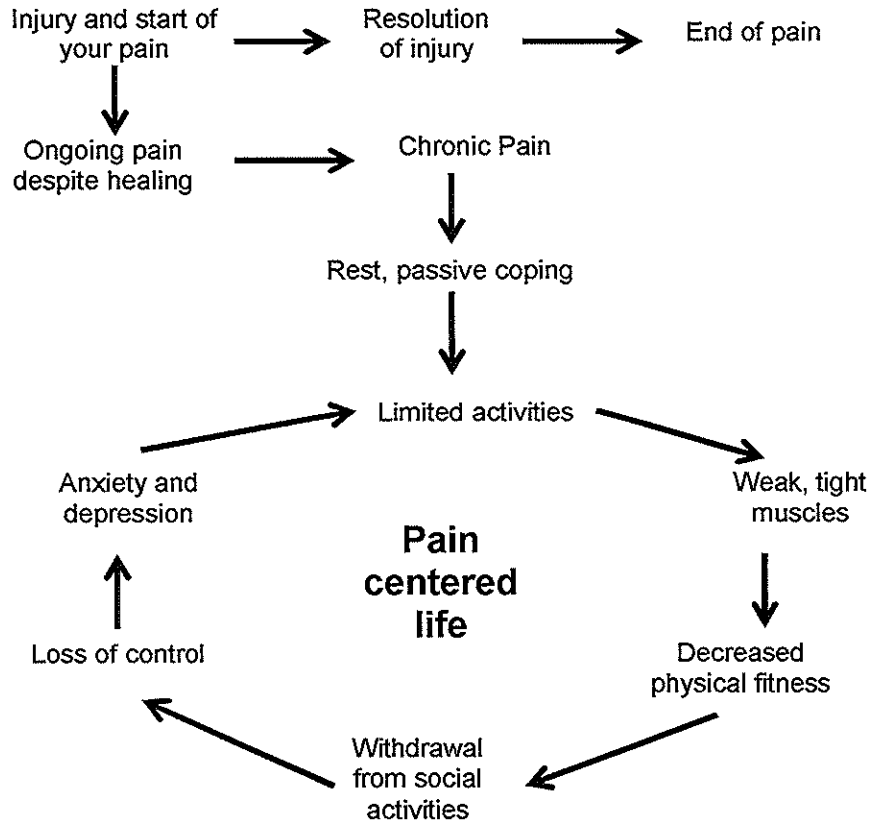
Burning, stabbing, shooting, aching, cutting, throbbing, and gnawing may be some words used to describe your pain.

Other words which may be used to describe the feeling of pain can include:

Numbness, tingling, tightness, pulling, swelling, pressure and cramping.

The Impact of Chronic Pain

Chronic pain can impact on many areas of your life. This may include work, relationships, intimacy, mood, sleep, exercise, hobbies, self-esteem or self-worth. The following picture illustrates the negative effects of ongoing chronic pain when that pain becomes the main focus of your daily living.



Myth: Medical science can cure most things now.

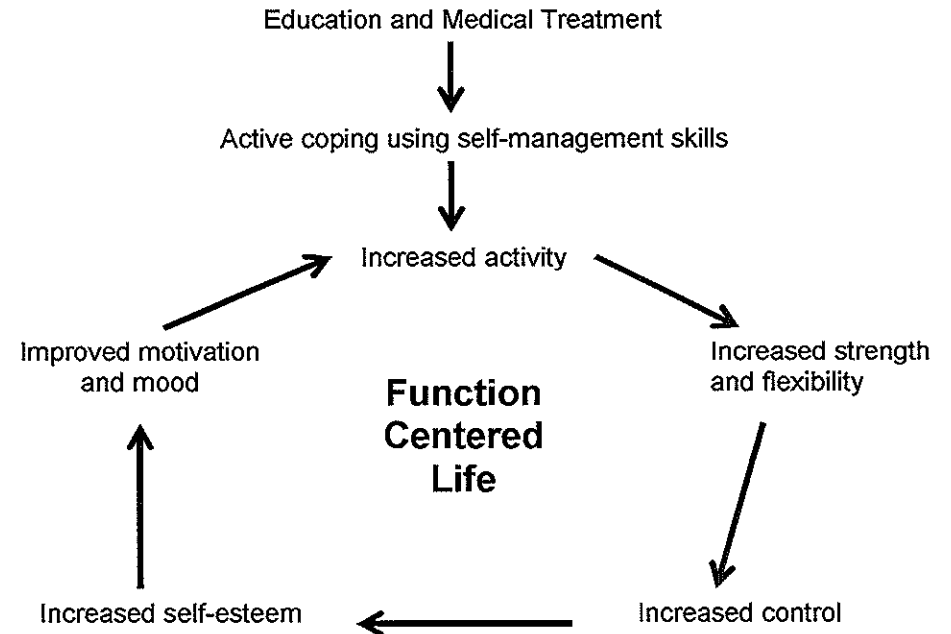
Fact: Sometimes pain cannot be cured.

Myth: If there is no known cause for your pain then it must all be in your head.

Fact: Your pain is real even if the cause is not known at the time.

Changing Your Focus to Break Free

When you can see how chronic pain may be affecting your life, you can work towards breaking free of the chronic pain spiral to live a more fulfilling life even with your pain. Things that *you can do* to help you manage your pain are called “self-management strategies”. These can be done in partnership with the suggestions made by your health care team.



Taking an active approach and involvement in coping with your pain that uses self-management skills can help you to reduce the negative impact of your pain on your life. The positive effects of this may be seen in your work, relationships, intimacy, mood, sleep, hobbies, recreation and self-esteem that can help you plan and work toward future goals.

Pain medication, narcotics or opioids, when used properly have a very low risk of addiction. A physical dependence may occur when using these medications, which is not the same thing as addiction. If you are prescribed an opiate or narcotic for your pain, remember the following:

1. Take these medications only as directed by your physician.
2. Do not combine prescription medication with street drugs or alcohol.
3. Do not borrow or lend medication. Take only what has been given to you by your doctor.
4. Tell your doctor exactly what you are taking, how you are taking it and how it makes you feel.

There are many other types of medication that may be used to assist with your pain in the form of creams, anti-depressants and anti-inflammatories.

What Else Can I Do?

There are many things you can do to help manage your pain.

1. **Be informed.** Read books, attend lectures, research on the Internet. Use your local librarian to help you find reliable resources if you are unsure of how to find them. A list of reliable information resources is at the back of this pamphlet.
2. **Get involved.** Be a partner with your doctor and community health care providers and look into joining support groups to form relationships that will better help you manage.
3. **Communicate clearly.** Keep track of your medication usage, your pain levels and what has been working and not working to help you manage your pain. If you are taking medication and experiencing side effects, tell your doctor exactly how you are feeling. Ask questions about possible treatment options and the risks and benefits that may be involved. Remember, it is your pain and your body, only you can tell us about your progress.