



# Chronic Pain

## What is it?

Chronic pain is pain that lasts longer than expected. It usually occurs after an injury or disease.

Chronic pain can be exhausting – both emotionally and physically. It can impact your day-to-day activities, working life, social life, and family life. If you're experiencing chronic pain, don't lose hope. There are many steps you can take to manage and improve your pain. Many people with chronic pain do get better and go on to lead normal, active lives.

## What will my GP do now?

Your GP will work with you to identify the reason for your pain and help you start treatment. Your GP will also develop your pain management plan.

This tailored plan will help you achieve your personal health and lifestyle goals.

The plan is an important step in your recovery, and will include steps like:

- Referrals to other health professionals you may need to see
- How to return to work, or manage your current situation
- How to manage other challenges that may be impacting your daily life
- The best way to stay active
- When and how to take any medicines

## What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP will regularly review your pain management plan and medications. Your GP may also refer you to a specialist. Other health professionals who can become involved in your chronic pain care include:

**Exercise physiologist** – to help you develop an exercise plan

**Occupational therapist** – to help you manage your daily life and self-care

**Physiotherapist** – to help with movement and any restrictions

**Psychologist** – to help you cope with the pain and regain your confidence

## What can I do?

To give yourself the best chance of managing your chronic pain:

- **Eat a healthy diet** – including plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables
- **Get enough sleep** – aim for eight hours every night
- **Make an effort to stay social** – spend time with family and friends
- **Drink plenty of water** – stay hydrated throughout the day
- **Don't avoid all activities that cause pain** – this can make recovery harder for you over time
- **Follow your pain management plan** – talk to your GP if you have questions
- **Move as often as you can** – after talking to your GP about what's appropriate
- **Be aware of any changes in your pain** – learn to tell the difference between 'normal' pain and pain that might be a concern

## Common pain medicines

Common medicines that can help you manage your chronic pain include:

### Paracetamol

Helps to reduce pain and fever

### Codeine

Opiate used to treat pain

### Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

Help to relieve pain and inflammation

### Tramadol

An opioid pain medicine which treats moderate to severe pain

### Specialist medicines

For your specific chronic pain condition

While medication can help you feel better, it doesn't "cure" your pain. It is only one aspect of your pain management plan

# Chronic Pain

## What supports are available?

### Managing your chronic pain

The **Liverpool Hospital Pain Service** can provide dedicated support to help you manage your chronic pain. Talk to your GP to about how a referral to this service could help you.

### Struggling to cope with your pain

If you're finding it difficult to deal with your chronic pain, you can contact the **Australian Pain Management Association Pain Link Hotline** on 1300 340 357 – or visit [painmanagement.org.au](http://painmanagement.org.au)

### Pain support groups

Support groups offer friendship, information, presentations and guest speakers for people living with chronic pain. You can find support groups through the **Australian Pain Management Association** and [myjointpain.org.au](http://myjointpain.org.au)

## What questions could I ask my doctor?

- Do I need medicine?
- What treatments do I need?
- Should I exercise, and what exercise should I do?
- What kind of physical therapy do I need?
- What changes should I make to my lifestyle?
- What supports are available for people with chronic pain?

## Where can I learn more?

If you'd like to read more about chronic pain management, the following resource list can help:

- **Australian Pain Management Association:** [painmanagement.org.au](http://painmanagement.org.au)
- **Chronic Pain Australia:** [chronicpainaustralia.org.au](http://chronicpainaustralia.org.au)
- **NPS (National Prescribing Service)** – Chronic Pain Handout: [nps.org.au](http://nps.org.au)
- **The Pain Toolkit App:** [paintoolkit.org](http://paintoolkit.org)
- **Agency for Clinical Innovation** – Pain Bytes Series: [aci.health.nsw.gov.au](http://aci.health.nsw.gov.au)

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

**phn**  
SOUTH WESTERN  
SYDNEY

An Australian Government Initiative