

healthy choices



live well. be well.



Chronic Pain

If you or a loved one has had chronic (ongoing) pain for months or years, you may feel overwhelmed and discouraged.

Realities of Chronic Pain

- All pain is real-

Even though the pain signals are no longer useful, that doesn't mean the pain is imaginary.

With chronic pain, the signal is no longer useful — the pain is "old news." Long after an injury or illness is healed, the nerves keep sending the alarm. Or, a chronic illness causes ongoing pain that can't be resolved.

- Chronic pain is complex-

On going pain can affect the body, mind, and spirit — and your relationships with others — in ways that many other chronic medical conditions do not. And pain itself can be affected by many factors, such as sleep, mood, and stress.

- Chronic pain is common-

Estimates of the number of Americans who cope with chronic pain range from 50 million to 116 million. Studies show that 5 times more people live with chronic pain than with diabetes (one of the most common medical conditions). Chronic pain can make you feel isolated at times, but you're certainly not alone.

Causes of Chronic Pain

Chronic pain can develop from an injury, surgery, infection, or dozens of medical conditions.

For example:

- After an injury or surgery, nerve fibers can change so they no longer function properly.
- Certain areas of the brain can change over time, so the brain creates pain signals on its own.
- An ongoing medical condition such as rheumatoid arthritis can continue to cause pain for some people. In some cases, what started the pain or why it continues isn't clear.

Your primary care doctor

If you have chronic pain, it's especially important to work well with your primary care doctor. These tips can help:

- Be open and honest about your pain, your emotions, and any barriers that may keep you from following the pain management plan.
- Talk with your primary care doctor about any treatments you're considering. Chronic pain can leave you feeling like you're in a "medical maze," especially when you get tips from friends, family, or the internet about tests or treatments for your condition. Your doctor can give you solid advice.
- Get the most of your appointments, Bring key family members. Make a list of your most important questions, and ask them first. This helps you get the advice you want without running out of time.





Mental Health Awareness

Your mental health matters. Mental health is just as important as physical health. Good mental health helps you cope with stress and can improve your quality of life.

What is mental health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

How can I improve my mental health?

Staying positive.

Being physically active.

Connecting with others.

Healthy eating.

Why is mental health important?

Mental health is important because it can make you:

- Realize your full potential
- Work productively
- Cope with the stresses of life
- Be physically healthy
- Have good relationships



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