

SEPTEMBER 2020



## PAIN AWARENESS MONTH

**Nearly 100 million Americans experience chronic pain**—more than those who have diabetes, heart disease and cancer combined.

**Pain is a warning sign** that indicates a problem that needs attention.

**Pain starts** in receptor **nerve cells located beneath the skin and in organs** throughout the body.

**Living with pain can adversely affect everyday life.**

The most common conditions associated with pain are:

- **Back pain**
- **Arthritis**
- **Headache**



**No one should put their health at risk to be pain free.** Doctor-prescribed opioids are appropriate in some cases, but they just mask the pain—and **opioid risks include depression, overdose, and addiction.**

While you may experience good days and bad days with your pain, there's a lot you can do to make the good days better and the bad days less frequent. **Physical therapy can help you treat and manage chronic pain without invasive surgeries or potentially addictive medications.**

Physical therapy treats pain in several ways. It can strengthen muscles and joints and help you **learn to move and perform daily activities** in ways that don't aggravate old injuries or put you at risk of new ones.

It can treat inflammation and address the movement dysfunction that's at the core of much chronic pain. **Physical therapy can re-educate your central nervous system to make it less sensitive to pain signals.**

### LIFESTYLE CHANGES TO MANAGE PAIN



#### IF YOU SMOKE, QUIT

Smokers are nearly 3 times more likely to get lower back pain. Smoking may aggravate abdominal pain and joint pain.



#### MANAGE STRESS

Stress can increase muscle tension and pain. Take time out to relax, exercise or attend counseling.



#### MODIFY YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Changes to your work space, attire, and home can reduce back pain. If you sit for a long time, try using a stool to bring your knees above your hips.



#### LOSE WEIGHT

Obesity contributes to back and limb pain in general, extra pounds can increase pressure on the spinal muscles and disks. Talk to a doctor about a diet and exercise plan.

## MUSCLE OR NERVE PAIN?



**MUSCLE PAIN** is usually caused by a physical injury. Once an injury heals, muscle pain subsides (nerve pain often lingers).

### NERVE PAIN



NUMBNESS



BURNING



TINGLING



"PINS & NEEDLES"



STABBING SENSATION



ELECTRIC-SHOCK PAIN

# CHRONIC PAIN

## 5 TIPS TO MANAGE CHRONIC PAIN

### #1

#### Knowledge is Power

Understanding how pain works is a key in managing it and can decrease the chance of developing chronic symptoms.



### #2

#### Keep Moving

Living an active lifestyle not only improves our general well-being but can also reduce our chances of developing chronic pain.



### #3

#### Access Physical Therapy

If you experience an injury, or develop the onset of pain – Access physical therapy care early.



### #4

#### Focus Less on the Image

While most of us want a MRI or x-ray to tell us "why we hurt," – it may or may not be related to your symptoms.



### #5

#### Address Depression & Anxiety

Talk to your medical provider about any mental health concerns during your treatment, from an injury or surgery.

