

What is Pain?

There are two types of pain: acute and chronic.

Acute pain is a normal pain that alerts you when something hurts. An injury or illness, such as a cut, sprain, broken bone, or an infection are a few causes. Acute pain often lasts less than three months and it goes away when it is treated. If it is not treated, it can become chronic.

Chronic pain often lasts more than three months. It can be caused by an ongoing health condition like arthritis or it can continue after an injury has healed. It can also exist without a clear cause. Untreated chronic pain can limit eating, sleeping, and movement. It can also change your mood, add stress to your body and mind, and make healing hard.



Symptoms of Chronic Pain

Pain can be described as:

- A dull ache
- Soreness
- Stiffness
- Stinging
- Squeezing
- Throbbing
- Burning
- Shooting

Treatment

There are many ways to treat chronic pain. Talk to your medical provider about your symptoms to help them find the source. Tell them where the pain is, how bad it is, and how often it occurs. Once identified, your medical provider will work with you to find the best combination of treatments. They will usually not take away all of your pain, but they can reduce how much pain you have and how often it occurs.

Some treatment options include:



Medication, such as pain relievers, can treat moderate to severe chronic pain. Be sure to take them as prescribed.



Physical and behavioral therapy



Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing



Heat and cold therapy



Massage or acupuncture

Living with Chronic Pain

Living with chronic pain can be very difficult. It is important to take care of yourself to avoid your pain becoming worse. Get plenty of sleep, eat a healthy diet, and try to exercise moderately. Do your best to manage your stress and depression. Understand your limits and work within them. You can also ask for help with tasks that you are not able to do.