Successful treatment of chronic pain requires your active participation in the treatment plan. You are in control of your pain.

Our goal is to provide you safe, quality care. Treatment is based on your specific goals, aimed at improving function and quality of life, and reducing pain while not necessarily being pain free.

Chronic pain is best treated with a combination of treatments including:

- Lifestyle changes: exercise, activity, improving sleep, and nutrition
- Managing stress
- Heat, cold, massage, and distraction
- Physical therapy
- Medications
- Complementary therapies such as meditation, yoga and relaxation therapy

Other treatments may be recommended by your clinician for specific pain conditions.

**Physical activity**

Regular physical activity and exercise are essential to managing your pain. It is important to gradually increase your activity to overcome deconditioning and to pace your activity with periods of rest to avoid a flare of pain. Talk with your clinician before starting an exercise program to make sure it is safe for you.

**How you think about your pain influences how you feel!**

Understanding how your thoughts and emotions affect your pain will help you take control over your pain. Mindfulness is a strategy used to separate the physical pain from the emotional reaction. Using mindfulness can lead to acceptance of your pain and improved emotional well-being. Mindfulness shifts your thinking from “I have pain and there is nothing I can do about it” to “I have pain but I will choose how it affects me.”
Medications for chronic pain

Medications are not the only treatment used to manage chronic pain. When needed, your clinician will prescribe specific types of medication to treat different aspects of your pain. Medications used to treat chronic pain can include:

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
- Anticonvulsants (seizure medications)
- Antidepressants
- Opioid pain medications

What you need to know about opioid pain medications

Not all patients need opioid pain medications for chronic pain. Current scientific evidence does not support the long-term use of opioid pain medications for chronic noncancer pain. Opioids are potent medications that have serious risks of overdose and even death when not used as directed. Use of opioids can cause addiction, especially with long-term use. When used as directed, there is less risk of harm. Other side effects of opioids include:

- Tolerance—needing more medication to get the same amount of pain relief
- Physical dependence—you can have symptoms of withdrawal when the medication is stopped suddenly
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation, nausea, and vomiting
- Sleepiness, dizziness, and confusion
- Depression
- Low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy, and strength

Avoid alcohol while taking opioids. Use of medications that cause drowsiness should be avoided unless used under the direction of your clinician. Muscle relaxers, anxiety medications, and sleeping pills are just a few medications that increase the risk of overdose while taking opioids.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Hospital Association; May 9, 2016

Monitoring opioid pain medication use

Regular monitoring is required for all patients receiving opioid pain medication, including:

- Use of a controlled substance treatment agreement
- Periodic urine drug screens. The cost of this urine drug screen is your responsibility if there is a bill beyond what your insurance covers.
- Pill counts

During your initial visit, opioid pain medications will not be refilled until information from your previous clinician is reviewed.

For specific questions related to your pain treatment, talk to your clinician.