

Addressing Your Chronic Pain in the Emergency Department

Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is pain that lasts for at least 3 months. It may ease a little but it may never go away. The pain is both physical and emotional. It can interfere with your ability to work and enjoy life. This can cause feelings of anger or sadness.

A chronic pain flare-up occurs when the pain is worse than it usually is. During this time, your pain may be unbearable.

Emergency Department Treatment

The Emergency Department health care staff will evaluate and treat your chronic pain flare-up.

Prescription Pain Medicine

You may or may not receive prescription pain medicine during your Emergency Department visit.

Follow-up Appointment

Make an appointment with your regular doctor as advised by the Emergency Department staff. Be sure to tell your doctor about your current treatment plan and how you are feeling.

Keep your follow-up appointment even if you are feeling better.

Your treatment plan may include medicine, lifestyle changes and other therapies.

- **Physical therapy:** When you exercise, your body releases hormones that relieve pain. Exercise will also help strengthen and stretch your muscles.
- **Pacing activities:** Alternating rest with activity and breaking up larger tasks into smaller ones will help your body.
- **Occupational therapy:** You can learn to do your daily tasks in ways that will lessen your pain.
- **Talk therapy:** Talking to a mental health care provider can help relieve the stress you may feel as a result of your physical pain.
- **Integrative therapies:** You may also find relief and relaxation in meditation, acupuncture, massage, yoga and biofeedback.
- **Lifestyle changes:** For your well-being, it is important to take care of yourself. Lifestyle changes can be difficult to make, so go slowly. Work on making one change at a time instead of trying to make several changes at once.
 - Eat healthful foods (include 5 to 8 servings of fruit and vegetables each day).
 - Avoid alcohol.
 - Exercise each day.
 - Get at least 8 hours of sleep each night.
 - Lose weight if you need to.
 - Avoid tobacco and tobacco products.
- **Medicine:** You may be prescribed medicine such as an antidepressant, muscle relaxer, pain reliever or seizure medicine.

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Find a Regular Doctor or Pain Specialist

To help manage your pain, you should work with a regular doctor or pain specialist. He or she will understand you and your health. This is important so you can feel your best every day.

Together, you and your doctor or pain specialist can create a plan for chronic pain flare-ups. This plan will include therapies you can do at home to help relieve your pain.

You can receive a referral for a doctor or pain specialist before you leave the Emergency Department.

You may also find an Allina Health doctor or pain specialist on allinahealth.org.

Allina Health Resources

- The Penny George Institute® for Health and Healing: 612-863-3333
- Courage Kenny Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program: 612-775-2606
- Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute: 612-863-4200
- United Hospital Pain Center: 651-241-7246

Visit allinahealth.org for a complete list of Allina Health services, providers and locations.