

Managing CHRONIC PAIN



Chronic pain is one of the most common reasons people seek medical care. Most people with chronic pain can learn to manage their pain and live full lives. You should ask your doctor for help in addressing the cause of the pain. But if the pain can't be eliminated, you can still prevent your pain from interfering with your life and help you achieve your goals.

There are many ways you and your doctor can help reduce pain. Talk with your doctor about what is right for you.

PAIN MEDICATIONS

Your doctor may recommend a medication to help reduce your pain, depending on the cause. Some medications that treat pain are:

- » Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)
- » Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- » Naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn)
- » Celecoxib (Celebrex)
- » Gabapentin (Neurontin)
- » Topiramate (Topamax)
- » Diclofenac (Voltaren)
pill or gel
- » Diclofenac patch (Flector)
- » Lidocaine patch

OTHER PAIN TREATMENTS

For continued pain, other things can help, such as:

- » Meditation and yoga
- » Gentle stretching and exercise (check with your doctor)
- » Physical therapy
- » Acupuncture
- » Cognitive behavioral therapy

GETTING RID OF UNUSED MEDICATIONS

You may not need all the pills that are being prescribed to you. When your pain has gotten better, you should get rid of your unused medications. This can prevent other people from using them. There are many pharmacies and police stations have special boxes for returning medications. You can find the one closest to you at: <https://www.ddap.pa.gov/Get%20Help%20Now/Pages/Find-a-Drug-Take-Back-Location.aspx>

OPIOID MEDICATIONS

Some doctors prescribe opioid medications, such as Percocet, Vicodin and Oxycontin. These drugs can reduce pain over 2-3 days, but they are also dangerous and can lead to addiction and overdose. No scientific study has shown them to be helpful or safe for chronic pain.

If you have been taking opioid medications for chronic pain, ask your doctor about reducing your dose or changing to safer pain medications.

If you are prescribed opioid medications, you should:

- » Take the lowest dose possible and for no longer than 2-3 days.
- » Avoid taking them with alcohol or prescription medications used to treat anxiety, such as Xanax or Valium.
- » Keep your pills in a locked cabinet and get rid of pills that you don't use.
- » Ask your doctor about obtaining naloxone (Narcan), a medication that reverses opioid overdoses. Opioid medications contribute to thousands of overdoses across the country each year, so it's important that you and the people you live with have this life-saving medication. For more information about naloxone, visit: <https://www.phillynaloxone.com>