

Chronic pain

What is chronic pain?

The definition of pain is that 'pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage'. This is a widely used and accepted definition of both short-term acute pain and chronic pain. The information about pain is carried in nerves from all parts of the body through the spinal cord to the brain. There are at least two main pathways that carry information to the brain, one which goes to an area of the brain that tells us how much pain and where it is coming from (the sensory cortex) and another which goes to the emotional areas of the brain.

Chronic pain is pain that persists beyond what is considered a normal healing period. This pain lasts for a long time, generally more than 3 months, although each person experiences pain in a different way.

It's not always easy to find out the cause of this pain and it can reduce a person's quality of life. However pain management treatments and services can be used to manage pain and restore quality of life. Approximately 1 in 7 people in the UK have chronic pain or 28 million people.

What causes chronic pain?

People can develop chronic pain following a wide variety of injuries and illnesses. For example, following an accident, nerve damage (following surgery), [arthritis](#), Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis and [ME \(chronic fatigue syndrome\)](#).

Sometimes it is not easy to identify how the pain started and what caused it. It is often difficult for people to understand why they are still experiencing pain.

Local help and support

If you are experiencing chronic pain you can access support and advice from a number of local and national organisations, including your [local GP](#).

[Newcastle's Chronic Pain Management Service](#) aims to help people with persistent pain to reduce the level of pain they experience.

Alternative therapies or treatments may also be of interest such as:

- [Acupuncture](#)

- [Aromatherapy](#)
- [Chiropractic therapy](#)
- [Homeopathy](#)
- [Hypnotherapy](#)
- [Reflexology](#)
- [Reiki](#)
- [Shiatsu](#)

Tyneside Integrated Musculoskeletal Services (TIMS) offers self-care and access to expert opinion, diagnosis and treatment of a variety of muscle, joint and soft tissue conditions and chronic pain. They aim to help you to manage and treat some of the conditions that cause aches and pains in your own home. This includes: back, neck, knee, hip, ankle and elbow pain, arthritis, persistent pain and health in pregnancy. They also run the ESCAPE – Pain rehabilitation programme to help people manage their hip and knee pain through education and exercise. You can attend 10 to 12 sessions over 6 weeks at venues across Gateshead and Newcastle or join virtual classes.

Useful organisations

Action on Pain is a national charity providing support for people affected by chronic pain, either as a sufferer or a carer/relative. They offer a dedicated helpline, support groups and a range of information publications. They also have a wide range of online resources to help people manage their pain.

Patient Information Centre has a range of easy to read [mental health self help guides](#) including, anxiety, sleep loss and depression, available to download for free.

Flippin' Pain shares the latest (often surprising) science of pain with people in the UK. This knowledge can help people to reduce the effects of persistent pain, feel more in control, and even start the journey to recovery. If you're struggling, caring for someone in pain, or just interested in preventing pain for the future, visit their website for more information.

Pain UK provide a signposting service for people in pain where help is available.

Healthtalk has a section on Chronic pain

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Useful Organisations

Versus Arthritis

Email: enquiries@arthritisresearchuk.org

Website: <https://www.versusarthritis.org/>

Telephone: 0300 790 0400

Address: Copeman House, S41 7TD

Adult Social CarePoint at Newcastle City Council

Email: ASCP@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/AdultSocialCare>

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Adult Social CarePoint Newcastle City Council, NE4 9LU

Newcastle Carers

Email: info@newcastlecarers.org.uk

Website: www.newcastlecarers.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 275 5060

Address: 135-139 Shields Road, NE6 1DN

Action on Pain

Email: painline@action-on-pain.co.uk

Website: www.action-on-pain.co.uk

Telephone: 0345 603 1593

Address: 2 Mill Close, PE34 4JG

Patient Information Centre – Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)

Website: www.cntw.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0191 246 7288

Address: St Nicholas Hospital, NE3 3XT

Pain UK

Email: info@painuk.org

Website: <https://painuk.org/>

Telephone: 0191 246 7288

Address: C/O Shingles Support Society N7 9DP, N7 9DP

The Chronic Pain Management Service – Newcastle Hospitals

Website: <http://www.nhs.uk/Services/hospitals/Services/Service/DefaultView.aspx?id=94214>

Telephone: 0191 445 6319

Address: The Chronic Pain Management Service, NE1 4LP

Tyneside Integrated Musculoskeletal Services (TIMS)

Email: nuth.tims@nhs.net

Website: <https://www.tims.nhs.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 445 2643

Address: Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI), NE1 4LP

Flippin' Pain

Email: info@flippinpain.co.uk

Website: www.flippinpain.co.uk

Telephone: 0191 445 2643

Related Articles

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[Introduction to Complementary Therapies](#)

[10 Tips for good health](#)

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