

Chronic Pain

Chronic pain, which is defined as pain that is persistent and ongoing, may make it difficult to perform normal activities. It may also affect relationships and hamper job performance. Some people may develop chronic intermittent pain, which is pain that may flare up for a period of time and then subside.

Chronic pain typically comes from two sources:

- ▶ Neuropathic pain (pain caused by nerves)
- ▶ Myofascial pain (pain emanating from muscles and soft tissue)

It is not unusual for a person to have a combination of neuropathic and myofascial pain.

Chronic pain may result from a number of conditions, including:

- ▶ An injury that has not healed correctly
- ▶ Stress-related muscular tension
- ▶ Migraine headaches
- ▶ Arthritis
- ▶ Fibromyalgia
- ▶ Repetitive stress from performing the same physical action or task over prolonged periods of time

Common effects of chronic pain include:

- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Irritability, anger, or mood swings
- ▶ Depression



- ▶ Sleep or appetite disturbances
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Inability to perform favorite activities

While medication often helps with managing chronic pain, it may create other problems. Over time, the user may develop a tolerance and need increased doses. People who are taking prescription medication may be at risk of addiction and should work with a physician to manage its use.

Medication is not the only way to manage chronic pain. Other options that may be helpful include:

- ▶ Exercise, stretching, or yoga
- ▶ Massage, physical therapy, or chiropractic treatment
- ▶ Mindful meditation

If you are coping with the effects of chronic pain, LifeMatters can help. Call 24/7/365.

Source: The Kenneth Peters Center for Recovery

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