

Chronic Pain

What Is Chronic Pain?

Chronic pain is persistent pain that never seems to go away. Chronic Pain is defined as pain that has not gone away or recurs frequently.¹ While the pain may not be constant, it is the dominant fact of life for many chronic pain sufferers.

How Common Is Chronic Pain?

One in three Americans suffer from chronic pain; more than 100 million people are partially or totally disabled by pain² and 40% of Americans experience daily pain.³ It is the number-one cause of adult disability in the United States.⁴ The annual national economic cost of chronic pain in the United States is an estimated \$560 to \$635 billion.⁵

How Does Chronic Pain Affect Lives?

Constant chronic pain may lead to depression, broken marriages, destroyed friendships, and isolation. Traditional treatment with pain medication can lead to drug addiction. Chronic pain can interfere with every aspect of a person's life: work relationships, self-esteem and emotional well-being.

What Causes Chronic Pain?

Chronic pain has many different causes. Sometimes normal aging may affect bones and joints in ways that cause chronic pain. Other common causes are nerve damage, and injuries that fail to heal properly. In many cases, however, the source of chronic pain can be so complex, it is very difficult to diagnose.

What Are The Choices for Patients Who Suffer Chronic Pain?

Conservative options include over-the-counter medications and physical therapy. More powerful prescription drugs can also be prescribed, but they can carry the twin dangers of addiction and a diminished ability to function. Invasive surgeries like spinal operations are another choice, but the recovery time is long. Spinal cord stimulation is another option delivering electrical signals to the spinal cord to mask pain signals. It is a reversible therapy that has helped thousands of people find relief from chronic pain.

1. www.chronicpain.org

2. Institute of Medicine (http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=13172&page=1)

3. Pain Medicine (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1526-4637.2009.00696.x/full>)

4. American Chronic Pain Association (<http://www.theacpa.org/uploads/documents/Partners%20for%20Understanding%20Pain%20Electronic%20Press%20Kit1.pdf>)

5. Institute of Medicine (http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=13172&page=1)