

## Pain Management Information for Patients

Original Source: <http://www.painchannel.com/patient-information/>

### Overview

Persistent pain can affect every aspect of daily life. The relationship between the patient and the health care provider is an essential component of effective pain management. To develop and maintain a good relationship, it is important for the patient to feel comfortable enough to ask questions and important for the health care provider to answer questions and address concerns thoroughly.

Primary care physicians often are the first to treat patients who experience pain. These doctors (e.g., family practitioners, internists, pediatricians) play an important role in pain management. Pain doctors (also called pain management specialists) usually coordinate patient care as part of a pain management team. Good communication with each member of the health care team can help ensure that the patient's needs are met.

Your **pain management team** may include the following:

- Physician (e.g., pain doctor, physiatrist, psychiatrist, neurologist, internist, naturopathic doctor)
- Physician assistant
- Nurse/nurse practitioner
- Chiropractor
- Psychologist
- Alternative health care provider (e.g., acupuncturist)
- Physical therapist
- Occupational therapist
- Social worker
- Pharmacist

If possible, have a family member or friend attend appointments with you so they can help you remember information. If you do not understand something, ask your health care provider to explain it in terms that you can understand. Take notes and write down instructions, if necessary. It may also be helpful to bring a list of day-to-day concerns to your appointments so they can be addressed.

### General Information to Share with Your Pain Management Team

It is important to provide the following information to your pain management team before you begin treatment:

- How long have you been experiencing pain?
- Did the pain come on suddenly or develop gradually? What were you doing when you first experienced the pain?
- Describe the location of the pain. Does it occur in one place, or radiate from one part of the body to another, or does it occur throughout the body?
- Describe the intensity of the pain. Is it mild, moderate, or severe?
- Describe the sensation of the pain. (e.g., stinging, burning)
- Is the pain constant, or does it fluctuate? Does anything improve the pain? Worsen the pain?

- Does your occupation require physical exertion or mental stress? If so, how much?
- How does the pain affect your daily life? Does it interfere with activities, sleep, or appetite?
- Besides pain control, what are your goals during and following treatment (e.g., to continue hobbies)?

### **Basic Questions to Ask Your Pain Management Team**

Answers to the following questions may be helpful before beginning pain treatment:

- What is my diagnosis?
- Are additional tests or procedures required to confirm my diagnosis?
- What medications are available to control my pain? What are the side effects?
- What other treatment options are available? How do these treatment options differ?
- What treatment do you recommend? What percentage of patients responds to this treatment? What are the benefits and risks of this treatment?
- What is the goal of the recommended treatment (e.g., pain relief, increased mobility, increased function, improvement in daily living)?
- Do you have a financial interest in the recommended treatment? For example, are you receiving payment from the pharmaceutical company that produces the prescribed medications?
- Are the prescribed medications approved by the FDA to treat my specific condition?

### **During Pain Treatment**

If you continue to experience pain during treatment, ask your health care provider about the possibility of better pain control. It is important to discuss the impact of pain and treatment on your daily life with your pain management team. If necessary, take day-to-day notes so you can provide accurate information.