



Pain & Migraines

Embracing Health

Chronic pain can impact all aspects of a person's life, often robbing them of mobility, independence, peace of mind, security and self-esteem. It can cause addiction and depression – and is very often an issue for the sufferer's friends and family as well. If not treated properly, chronic pain can have profoundly negative affects on the lives of all it touches. Whether it's migraine, TMJ, Fibromyalgia, arthritis, back pain or any of the other myriad causes, finding ways to begin taking control can help create positive outcomes.

Start a Dialogue

My 411! Ask yourself, how familiar am I with the various types of chronic pain?

Talk 2 Me! Talk to your doctor? When the term chronic pain is used, exactly what does that mean?

Embracing Women

Although more than one in five Americans suffer from chronic pain, women are more likely to experience this condition. Alarmingly, their pain complaints receive less attention and validation than those made by men. Chronic pelvic pain is a common and debilitating problem that can significantly impair a woman's quality of life. Cystitis is another painful issue facing many women. Nearly 18 million women are affected by headaches. Although headaches warrant careful medical evaluation and treatment, most women have never received a formal diagnosis or evaluation in order to determine what treatment options may provide relief.

My 411! Ask yourself, do I feel like my doctor takes me seriously when I mention my problems with pain?

Talk 2 Me! Talk to your doctor. I've been having headaches pretty frequently for the past few months. How can I tell if this is something chronic? Could I have sinus problems or allergies?

Embracing Lifestyles

Black women with chronic pain experience more psychological distress, physical impairments and post traumatic stress disorder than white women with chronic pain which suggests that black women with chronic pain have particular needs that should be addressed through the access to and quality of pain care. All women dealing with migraine should avoid possible triggers whenever possible. These can include stress, too much or too little sleep, fasting or skipping meals, bright or reflected light, chocolate and/or caffeine, smoking or being around someone who smokes.

Get a Handle

My 411! Ask yourself, what steps can I take to prevent the onset of a migraine?

Talk 2 Me! Talk to your doctor. Is there anything we can do to determine what may be causing my migraines?

Embracing Common Sense!

Although the triggers creating chronic pain

problems differ from person to person, paying attention to what seems to aggravate you just makes sense. Migraine sufferers should pay special attention to strong emotions like depression or anxiety. While physical exercise is important to good health, keeping track of what seems to contribute to significant and lasting aches and pains will allow you to alter your routine and prevent long term consequences. Avoiding or limiting alcohol is also a good idea. Steering clear of aspartame (found in artificially sweetened foods); monosodium glutamate (MSG -- often found often in Chinese food and as a seasoning for meats and other edibles); nitrates (found in cured meats such as hot dogs, bacon, or cold cuts); and tyramines (found in pickled or marinated foods and aged cheeses or yeast) can help to prevent the onset of migraines.

Create Healthier Habits

My 411! Ask yourself, have I noticed anything I'm doing that may be contributing to the onset of headaches or other chronic pain problems?

Talk 2 Me! Talk to your doctor. I'm not sure if what I have are migraine headaches or just a normal, everyday variety. How can I tell the difference?

Embracing Science

Scientists are exploring the possibility of reducing the sensitivity to stimuli associated with chronic neuropathic and inflammatory pain by disabling certain nerve cells that transmit pain signals to the brain. It has also been discovered that the more intense and prolonged an acute

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pain episode is, the more likely it will result in a chronic pain situation. This is because neurons



My 411! Ask yourself, do I feel confident that my doctor has tried everything possible to treat my pain?

in the spinal cord that help to prevent pain transmission die and pain transmitting neurons grow more connections to other nerves, becoming more sensitive and reacting more strongly to a painful stimulus. As these scientific discoveries unfold, doctors will be better able to reduce pain when it initially occurs, to better avoid long term damage.

It's Time for Show and Tell

My 411! Ask yourself, is there any acute pain problem I should be treating now in order not to develop a chronic pain situation later?

Talk 2 Me! Talk to your doctor. What are the latest developments for treating my type of chronic pain?

Possible tests for chronic pain

There is currently no way to accurately tell how much pain a person is experiencing because no test can measure the intensity, no imaging device can show it, and no instrument can absolutely pinpoint it. Grading pain on a scale of 1 to 10, or talking about it in terms of intensity is about as close as we can get. Your doctor may utilize some electro-diagnostic procedures, MRIs, neurological exams or x-rays in an attempt to better understand your situation.

Make Smart Choices

Talk 2 Me! Talk to your doctor. Are there any tests you can recommend that might help us determine where my pain originates and why?

Possible treatments for chronic pain

Since the origin of chronic pain varies from patient to patient, treatment options differ greatly. Some individuals find relief with over the counter pain relievers like acetaminophen or anti-inflammatory drugs like aspirin. Still others use corticosteroids that can be purchased at the local pharmacy. Prescription pain relievers include: corticosteroids, opioids (like morphine and codeine) and antidepressants.

My 411! Ask yourself, is my level of pain affecting my ability to have a normal life?

Talk 2 Me! Talk to your doctor. If I begin taking medication to help keep my pain levels bearable, what can I do to prevent addiction or drug dependence?

Embracing Strength

People suffering from chronic pain are often tempted to play the "blame game" and view the world around them as somehow contributing to the problem. Creating a healthy mindset is an important factor when it comes to dealing with

this issue. Concentrate on what you can do – not what you can't. Stay informed so you know which new developments may help you. Yoga, meditation, Tai Chi and Pilates have each proven beneficial to the mind, body and spirit, so embracing gentle ways to stay active and fit is a very healthy approach. Believe you can make a

difference and make every attempt to stay focused on that thought.

Simple Steps

My 411! Ask yourself, I wonder if meditation would help me to stay calmer and keep my headaches from getting so severe?

Talk 2 Me! Talk to your doctor. I believe that staying as active as possible is good for me. Are there any physical activities you don't feel are appropriate for my condition?

