Chronic pain can cripple the body, mind and spirit. Feeling broken? You may benefit from Cleveland Clinic's Section of Pain Medicine, which tailors comprehensive, innovative treatment that addresses every aspect of chronic pain.
Managing Chronic Pain

Chronic pain affects more than 40 million Americans according to the National Institutes of Health.

Many who fail to respond to conventional treatments continue to suffer with no end in sight. Chronic pain can evolve into a disability that affects the daily activities and attitudes of both the person affected and their loved ones. Some long-time sufferers withdraw from activities that once gave them joy, and become depressed, defeated, angry and helpless.

A partner in chronic pain
Chronic pain sufferers need an intensive, comprehensive approach to treatment that starts with establishing an accurate diagnosis. Cleveland Clinic’s Section of Pain Medicine is one of the longest-running, most innovative programs addressing the multifaceted needs of patients with chronic pain. Our team of experts creates customized care plans for patients, which include treatments by multiple specialists — an approach that helps provide the best pain relief possible.
A team approach

Research shows that complex pain is best managed by specialists who work together as a team to tailor individualized treatments. In the Section of Pain Medicine, a collaborative team of professionals address reducing symptoms, restoring function and improving quality of life.

All our physicians are board-certified in Pain Medicine and our highly trained physical, occupational and behavioral therapists specialize in diagnosing and treating a wide variety of chronic pain conditions, including spinal conditions, rheumatological conditions such as arthritic and autoimmune diseases, neurological conditions and cancer pain. Our psychologists all have advanced training in treating patients with chronic pain.

Conditions we treat:
• Spine pain from disc, joint, muscle and ligament disease and nerve injury
• Neuropathic pain from a variety of conditions
• Post-laminectomy syndrome
• Complex developmental and acquired spinal conditions
• Abdominal and pelvic pain
• Headaches
• Peripheral neuropathy
• Complex regional pain syndromes, including reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome
• Arthritic pain
• Cancer pain
• Post-stroke pain
• Emotional conditions resulting from chronic pain, including depression and anxiety

Treatment approaches:
We believe that a thorough evaluation and establishment of a diagnosis lay the foundation for the formulation of a successful treatment plan. Lack of a clear diagnosis often leads to a succession of failed therapies, placing the patient at the risk of complications. Our team believes a thorough history is essential, which takes into account how pain and other symptoms have affected the patient’s life. In addition, we utilize the most advanced diagnostic tools available to establish the diagnosis. Then, we recommend and can provide the most current evidence-based treatments tailored specifically to the patients’ needs.
Some of the treatments we offer include:

**Interventional procedures:**
- Epidural steroid injections
- Facet injections
- Radio frequency ablation
- Discography
- Neurolytic injections
- Celiac plexus blocks
- Lumbar sympathetic block
- Splanchnic block and radiofrequency ablation
- Peripheral nerve blocks, including genitofemoral and inguinal nerve blocks
- Stellate and sphenopalatine ganglion blocks
- Spinal cord stimulation
- Intrathecal drug delivery
- Peripheral nerve stimulation

**Medication Management:**
- Anti-inflammatories
- Serotonin-norepinephrine uptake inhibitors
- Membrane stabilizers
- Opioids
- Sympathetic blocking agents

**Physical therapies:**
- Land and water based treatments
- Functional capacity evaluations

**Occupational therapies:**
- Ergonomic evaluation
- Assistance in addressing activities of daily living, including home and work

**Psychological Approaches:**
Relaxation techniques are used to retrain the body to cope with pain and to reduce the muscle tension and neurological arousal that intensify pain. Individuals learn how to relax and adopt a mindset that allows them to reduce feelings of stress, depression and anxiety that worsen pain. The key is breaking the pain-stress-pain cycle through the use of tools, including:

- Guided imagery
- Biofeedback-assisted pain and stress management
- Individual or group counseling
- Specialized groups for conditions such as abdominal pain and fibromyalgia
- Educational classes about chronic pain and its treatment

Our outpatient treatment services include group therapy, medication management and assistance with moving from sickness to wellness.

**Chronic pain and addiction:** The burden of pain is greater in the presence of addiction. We have a great deal of experience in evaluating and educating patients who suffer from this disease complex and in arranging appropriate treatment for them.
“A Person, Not a Patient”

PENNEY COWAN  |  Rocklin, California
*Founder and executive director, American Chronic Pain Association (ACPA)*

**DIAGNOSIS:** Fibromyalgia, which she endured for six years before she joined the pain management program’s first patient group (1979)

“We look to healthcare providers to fix us, but this program taught me that I had to share in the responsibility of dealing with and overcoming my pain. I needed to think of myself as a person, not a patient. I learned to redirect my thoughts away from my pain, reduce my sense of suffering and improve the quality of my life. I realized that I was not the only person living with pain, and I knew it was possible to live a full life in spite of the pain, so I created the ACPA, which now has more than 400 chapters worldwide. The pain program provided me with the road map to make this journey.”

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Improved flexibility, strength and endurance help chronic pain sufferers manage everyday tasks, return to work and even return to hobbies.
Neurological Center for Pain

Chronic Pain rehabilitation Program

The American Pain Society has designated Cleveland Clinic's Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program as a 2012 Clinical Center of Excellence. This designation was awarded to only five programs across the country in 2012. The award recognizes Cleveland Clinic's program for its outstanding performance in collecting and reporting patient outcomes data as well as incorporating a substance abuse education track as part of the program.

Through this specialized service, the Section of Pain Medicine reaches out to individuals who are physically and emotionally impaired by their pain. This unique three- to four-week program is intensive and interdisciplinary, with day-long clinics focused on physical rehabilitation, stress and pain control regimens, and medication management, including weaning from opioids, benzodiazepines and other addictive substances. The comprehensive approach helps jump-start participants' long-term management of chronic pain.

Among the many services the Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program offers are:

- Physical and occupational therapy
- Functional capacity evaluation to determine work ability
- Coping skills training, including group and individual cognitive behavioral therapy
- Individual and group therapy to reduce depression, anxiety, anger and other emotions that result from pain and make it worse
- Innovative relaxation therapy and other mind-body exercises
- Monitored weaning of addictive substances
- Addiction education, if needed

After completing the program, individuals also can choose to continue with the Section of Pain Medicine's follow-up services.

Centers of Excellence
Awards Recipient 2012

Same-day consultation appointments available. 216.636.5860 or 866.588.2264
“Pain Does Not Define Me”

MARU BERRİOS | Guaynabo, Puerto Rico
Founder of an ACPA chapter in Puerto Rico and an Internet group for Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program graduates

**DIAGNOSIS:** Chronic back pain, which she suffered for seven years before she picked up a brochure that inspired her to try the program (2007)

“This program changed my life. I used to divide my life as ‘before pain’ and ‘after pain.’ Now, it’s ‘life before the program’ and ‘life after the program.’ I can do the small things now, and the big things, too: I can walk 10 kilometers in one hour, 36 minutes. I exercise daily, I’m making new friends, I’m out of the house, I’m jumping off airplanes – literally, skydiving – and having lots of fun! When people ask me how I’m doing, I don’t talk about my pain anymore. Pain does not define me. I’ve regained control of my life. I’m stronger now. And I’m free of addictive painkillers.”

Contact Us

Help is available for those who need it. Same-day consultation appointments are available. To make an appointment or to refer a patient to Cleveland Clinic’s Neurological Center for Pain, call 216.636.5860 or toll free at 866.588.2264. Visit clevelandclinic.org/chronicpain for additional information.