

No Gain in Pain and How to Manage

In maintaining a quality of life, it is important to have the ability to enjoy the everyday wonders of living. Some appreciate gardening while others “dive” into extreme sports. But once pain takes over, all things can go downhill from even the most minimal routine tasks to the endearing hobbies people love and enjoy.

Pain perception is often programed in our formative years and we know a severe trauma or painful stimulus can set a strong memory pattern and sensitize us to pain. Nerves bring the message to the brain and the brain interprets that message.

There are some essential things people can do to minimize and relieve their suffering of any kind of pain, whether acute or chronic. Those with pain can learn how to cope naturally by relaxation, deep-breathing or acupuncture. There also are medications that can ease, if not eliminate, the pain.

Opiates often are the first to come to mind but should actually be the last option for treatment. Opiates increase sensitivity to pain and decrease tolerance to painful stimuli and the body adapts to the opiates in the system by making more enzymes and breaking it down faster. Thus higher and higher doses are needed to have the same effect on pain. Unfortunately, the effect on the respiratory system does not adapt and more than 160,000 patients per year who are prescribed opiates for chronic pain die as a result. Lastly, there also is a high risk of addiction.

Different medications for pain include:

- SSRIs increase pathways to block the message coming up the brain into the spine

- Gabapentin is used to block the relay of the pain in nerve endings to the spine

- Medications to block the perception of pain at the nerve endings such as numbing cream, icy hot, TENS units and cayenne pepper

It is often best to start with physical therapy.

Therapists at the Copper Queen Medical Associates rural health clinics are highly trained (some with PhDs) on the muscle skeletal system, and have vast knowledge on diagnosis and treatment. Their prescriptions serve to heal, strengthen and maintain the highest function and minimal inflammation. Think of them as a personal trainer advising you on a lifelong activity regime.

Pain management can be contained allowing the person to move forward and expect much more in their active lifestyle. It is vital for the person experiencing pain to get treated as soon as possible to continue on with their life free of pain or managed to a degree.



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