Primary care pathway: for adults living with chronic pain - Regina

Prevention

- Chronic Pain and Exercise Fact Sheet
- City of Regina Leisure Guide
- Forever in Motion
- Physical Activity Tips for Adults
- Regina - Paul Schwarzman Centre
- Active Living for Pain

Support to stop smoking

Smoking makes you more sensitive to pain. Stopping smoking may help reduce your pain.

- Pharmacy Association of SK Quit Smoking Information
- Smokers’ Helpline: 1-866-366-8667
- Quit Smoking Online Programs or Help Support Smokers’ Helpline
- SHA Ongoing Smoking Patient Information and Health Tools

Support for healthy eating

Healthy eating and maintaining a healthy body weight (not underweight or overweight) may help reduce pain.

- Food Bank - Help is Here
- Canada Food Guide
- SHA Healthy Eating Tips
- SHA Eating Well Meal Planner
- Get advice from a diettian about foods that may help with pain management.
- Eat Well Saskatchewan

Sleep Quality

Good quality sleep can help reduce pain and low mood. Practicing healthy sleep habits can be helpful.

- My Sleep Well - deep hygiene
- SHA Sleep Apeana Patient Information Website
- Usask Pain-Modification Therapy for Insomnia Resources
- Ask if a sleep clinic referral is right for you.

What to expect with your chronic pain assessment: Your healthcare provider may take several visits to assess your pain. These are some ways your pain may be assessed and how you can be ready for the assessment.

1. Treatment Goals

Healthcare visits are busy. If you have many health issues, your provider may not be able to cover everything in one visit. Prepare before your visit to know your questions and priorities. Complete this Self-Management Navigator Tool before your visit and bring the form when you meet with your provider.

Self-Management Navigator Tool

2a. Focused Pain History

- You may be asked to complete questionnaires before or during your visit or be asked about your pain:
  - When did your pain start?
  - What makes it better or worse?
  - How strong or intense is your pain?
  - Does your pain change throughout the day?

These questions may help your provider better understand your pain and the treatments that may help.

2b. Physical Exam

Your healthcare providers may ask you to complete questionnaires before or during your visit or be asked about your pain:

- Your provider knows what treatments are safe for you.

3. Assessment for Pain Interference

- Your healthcare provider may ask you to fill in questionnaires that ask about ways that pain gets in the way of your daily life. This is called “pain interference”.

4. Screen for Types of Pain

Your healthcare provider may ask you to complete questionnaires that ask about specific symptoms to help identify the type of pain you are having. There are 3 main types of pain. You could have more than one type of pain.

- Nociceptive — this is pain from an injury or disease (e.g. arthritis) in your tissues (muscles, bones, joints, organs). This pain is usually short lived unless there is an ongoing disease such as arthritis. This pain normally goes away as the tissue heals.
- Neuropathic — this is pain from an injured or diseased nerve. You may also have numbness, tingling, electric shock type sensations, or areas that are very sensitive to temperature or light touch. This pain may get better as the nerve heals. Nerve healing can be slow and some nerve injuries may not fully recover.
- Nociclastic — this is pain from changes in your central nervous system that make everything more sensitive. This pain may make sense — it can change from day to day. You may be sensitive to light touch or temperature changes in areas far away from where you were injured or where you have a disease. You may not have any underlying tissue problems to explain the pain.

Risk Factors Screening: Your healthcare provider may screen for serious problems (red-flags), trauma, and substance use. Your provider may also assess your mental health since pain may affect or be affected by depression, anxiety, and life stress.

Red-flags

- The large majority of chronic pain is not caused by something life-threatening.
- Your healthcare provider may send you for special tests or to a physician specialist for further assessment.
- It is important to treat your pain using the 4P’s of pain management while you wait for results from any special tests or specialist appointments (see page 2 for examples of 4P’s treatments).

Trauma

- Your healthcare provider may ask you questions about adverse events in your childhood, chronic stress, or post-traumatic stress disorder.
- These events can contribute to chronic pain for some people.
- Treatment for these experiences can also improve your pain.

Mental health

- Your provider may ask you questions or have you fill in a questionnaire to ask about depression, anxiety, or worried thoughts.
- Difficulties with mental health can make pain worse, and pain can lead to poor mental health.
- It is very common for people who live with pain to also have difficulties with mental health.
- Tell your provider if you are struggling with mental health or worried thoughts.
- Treating mental health can also improve your pain.

Substance use

- Your healthcare provider may ask you questions about your past use of substances such as alcohol or drugs.
- Knowing about your history with substances will help your healthcare provider know what treatments are safe for you.

What to Expect with Chronic Pain Treatment:

Many health care providers may be involved in your pain management, but self-management is the most important part of chronic pain management. This is also true for other chronic conditions, like diabetes or high blood pressure.

People living with chronic pain have the best outcomes when they use a 4 P’s approach to pain management rather than just relying on medications or treatments from healthcare providers. Active treatments like physical activity and mental health practices have the most benefit to help people LIVE WELL even through they have pain. For most people, what is needed to treat pain changes over time. That means that a treatment that didn’t work in the past may help you now. Work with your healthcare providers and try new things to find what works for you. Most treatments for chronic pain take time to work. While some work right away, others can take weeks to start helping.
Movement is an important pain management strategy that reduces pain and improves sleep, function, and overall wellbeing. Physical or occupational therapy, chiropractic, and massage therapy may help with your pain self-management plan. Restful sleep, healthy nutrition and stopping smoking can all help reduce pain.

**PHYSICAL and PREVENTION TREATMENT SUPPORTS**

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENTS—SELF-MANAGEMENT, SUPPORT GROUPS, and MENTAL HEALTH CARE**

Chronic pain can impact all aspects of a persons life, including employment/school, relationships, and mental health. Chronic pain can make a person feel alone. Psychological strategies can be learned on your own, with peers, or with a mental health care provider.

| Regina - SHA Adult mental health intake line: Phone: 306-766-7800 | Pain Canada - Live Plan Be | Psychologist Directory |
| University of Regina Psychology Training Clinic | Wellness Together Canada | Social Worker Directory |
| Non-insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit Counselling | Power over Pain Portal | Arthritis Support |
| Mobile Crisis Services 24/7 Help Lines (Regina area) Need someone to talk to? Call: 306-757-0127 | TAPMI Pain Education: Understanding Your Pain | Narcotics Anonymous-Regina |
| SHA Mental Health call 811 for 24/7 support | SaskPain Living with Pain—wellbeing and mental health supports | Alcoholics Anonymous-Regina |
| Wascana Adult Rehab Chronic Pain Education Program: (306) 766-5714 (Regina area) | LiveWell with Chronic Conditions | CADTH patient resource - evidence on psychological strategies for chronic pain |
| Online Therapy Unit Chronic Health Conditions Course | |

**PHARMACEUTICAL TREATMENTS—MEDICATION SUPPORTS**

Medications may not get rid of your pain, but they may help reduce your pain while you become more active in your self-management with movement and psychological strategies. Some medications, like opioids, can make some types of pain worse. Tell your healthcare provider if you have unpleasant side effects with your medication.

| Med Sask — pharmacist on call 1-800-665-3784 (Saskatchewan) | Medication Assessment Centre—book an appointment with a pharmacist to review your medications | RxFiles Getting Back on the Road of Life Information about pain management |
| RxFiles—Questions about Opioids and the Answers that May Surprise You | RxFiles—Questions about Sleeping Pills | RxFiles—Pain Links |
| Take home naloxone map - if you take opioids, have a naloxone kit available | Health Canada—What You Need to Know about Opioids | Institute for Safe Medication Practices—Storage and Disposal of Opioids |
| Choosing Wisely Canada—Opioid Wisely | Choosing Wisely Canada—Headache | Choosing Wisely Canada—Back Pain |
| PEER Simplified Chronic Pain Guidelines | |

† These services may charge fees