

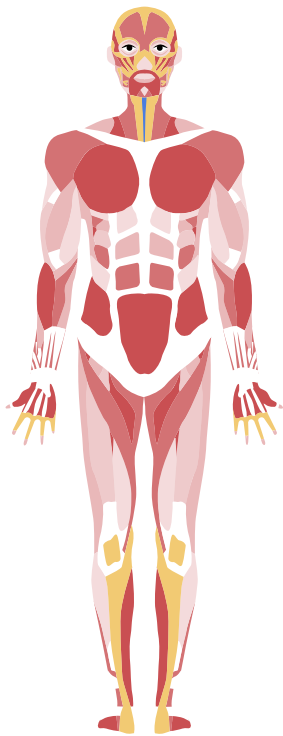
## Managing your pain: An information guide

### What is pain?

A personal, unpleasant sensory or emotional experience. This might be accompanied by tissue damage, but not necessarily.<sup>1</sup>



### What kind of pain do I have?<sup>1</sup>



TYPE OF PAIN	DEFINITION
<b>Acute</b>	Sudden pain, often caused by injury or illness, lasting less than six months.
<b>Chronic</b>	Pain lasting longer than three months; can be caused by physical, psychological and social factors.
<b>Nociceptive</b>	The most common type of physical pain caused by tissue damage. Bruises, burns, broken bones and more fall into this category of pain.
<b>Nociplastic</b>	Pain similar to nociceptive but without clear tissue damage.
<b>Neuropathic</b>	Shooting or tingling pain caused by nerve damage.
<b>Mixed</b>	A combination of different types of pain (e.g., chronic neuropathic pain).
<b>Total</b>	Refers to the overall physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual elements of pain.

Your health provider might use an assessment tool to better understand the nature of your pain. Be prepared to discuss your pain's location, quality (e.g., ache, sharp), intensity, frequency, and any previous treatment used (e.g., medication, stretching).

## What is a pain team?

A group of health providers from different disciplines (nurses, doctors, pharmacists and physiotherapists for example) who work together on a pain management plan.<sup>2</sup>

## What are the benefits of a pain team?

- Pain teams can address many aspects of the pain experience and may lead to more effective pain prevention, assessment and management across all ages.
- Individuals in pain and their families might be more satisfied with their pain management when seeing a pain team compared to only a single provider.
- Pain teams allow for easier access to care, as appointments are in one location and providers combine efforts for pain management.



Bringing a trusted family member or friend to your appointment can help your provider address your pain in a way that honours your values.

Often times, a combination of therapies can be used to prevent and address pain; ask your health provider about medicinal and non-medicinal strategies.



- Take your pain seriously and seek help early! Pain can have physical, psychological and social consequences.
- Speak with a loved one or a professional (e.g., psychotherapist) about the emotional impact of your pain.
- Voice your goals and preferences for pain management to your provider.
- Ask questions and seek help from a pain care team whenever possible.

See the full best practice guideline at:

<https://RNAO.ca/bpg/guidelines/assessment-and-management-pain>

### References:

1. Terminology. In: International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) [Internet]. Washington (DC): IASP; 2020 [cited 2024 Sep 10].
2. Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO). Pain: Prevention, assessment and management. 4th ed. Toronto (ON): RNAO; 2025.