



CARING FOR YOUR HEADACHE DISORDERS CHRONIC PAIN

Our mission is to improve the lives of migraine patients and their families and ultimately help find a cure.

About Chronic Pain

Sometimes chronic pain starts with some sort of trauma or major stressor, like an injury or illness. Sometimes, the pain builds on itself and the brain's pain dial gets stuck in the "on" position. Either way, the stress of pain can change both the physical body and the mind-body connection.

The Mind-Body Connection

Thoughts, feelings and decisions all cause a flood of chemical messages to be released throughout the body. These messages are sent to the endocrine (hormonal) system, the nervous system, and the immune system. Overtime, physical pain and emotional pain start triggering the same pain systems in the brain. Anger causes the muscles to tighten which also worsens pain signals. Anxiety and depression can interfere with the body's natural ability to fight pain.

The Mind and Body Learn Pain

The mind and body begin to learn and remember what causes the pain. The mind and body become overprotective, sending stronger and stronger pain signals to try and protect us from danger. The danger doesn't exist, but the brain thinks it does. This can cause nearly constant pain, anxiety and fear.

Healing Chronic Pain

You can train the brain to feel less pain. You can decrease your body and mind's learned sensitivity to pain by using mindfulness or cognitive behavioral therapy skills often taught by psychologists. Some steps to relieve chronic pain include:

- Understand and accept what is going on in your mind and body
- Work with a therapist or counselor to see if anxiety or depression are holding you back from healing
- Be kind and forgiving to yourself and your body
- Use tools to relax deeply, reduce stress, generate positive feelings and break

mind-body pain patterns

The pain may not disappear completely. There may always be times when a spike returns, and these steps need to be redone. You can be truly happy, in control of your life, and reach your goals despite pain.