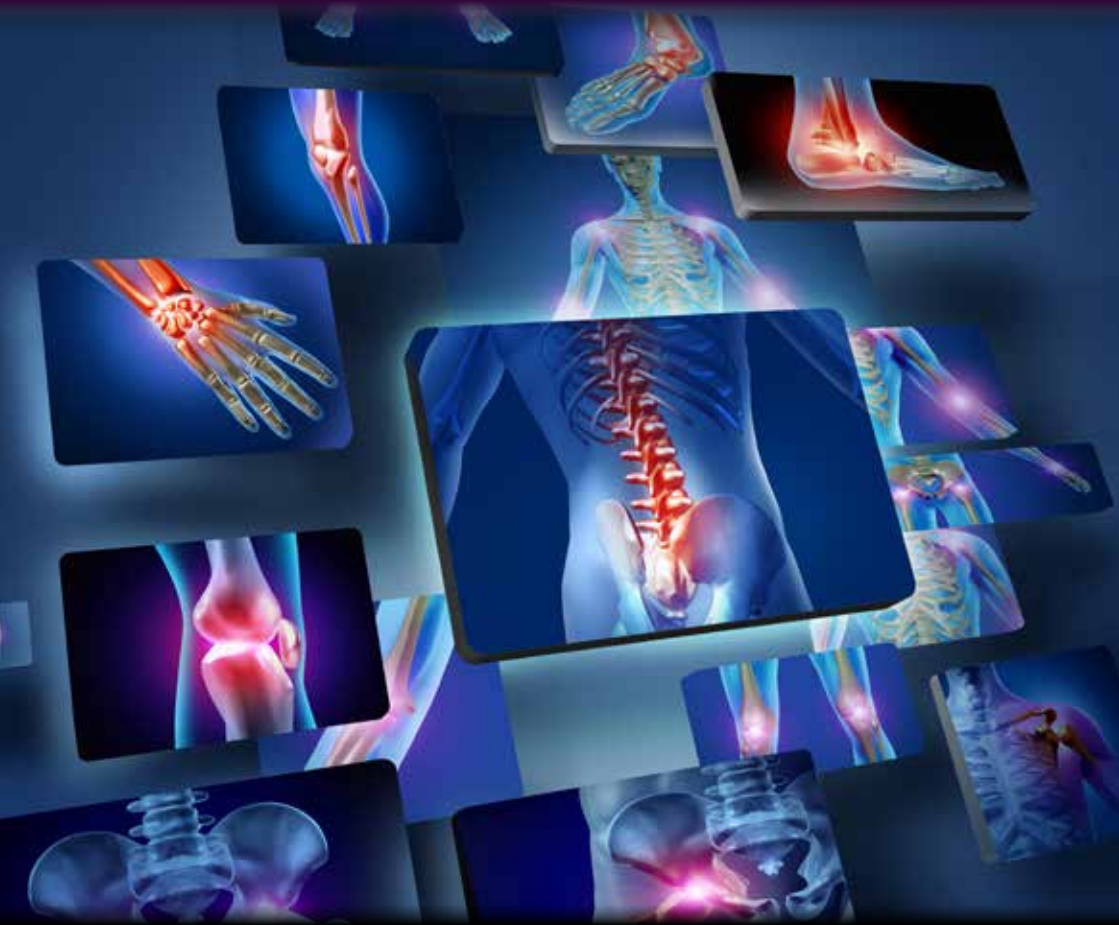




Polyclinics
SingHealth

What You Should Know About Pain



Disclaimer: Please note that the instructions shown are strictly for general information only. If you have any queries, kindly check with your healthcare provider.



SCAN ME



What is pain?

Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience that is experienced by almost anyone. Pain is a normal part of life. It alerts you to possible injury so that you can protect yourself.

There are two main types of pain:

- Acute pain happens suddenly and is short-lived. Common causes include muscle strain, ankle sprain, after surgery, dental pain, and headache.
- Chronic pain usually lasts 3 months or longer and can be continuous or intermittent. Common examples include arthritis, low back problems, and diabetes which affects the nerves (diabetic neuropathy).



B Why do we feel pain?

Pain is the body's alert mechanism to potential injury or tissue damage. It tells us that our body part could be in **danger** and needs attention.

For example, when we touch a pot of boiling water and we immediately withdraw our hand to prevent it from getting burned, or after an ankle sprain to remind us to rest and recover. The danger message starts from the injured area of the body and travels by nerves to the brain. The brain then interprets the danger message and creates the pain sensation if it feels the body needs protection.



Sometimes, especially in the case of chronic pain, the pain can be felt after the injury has healed and thus no longer need protection. Nerve can become overstimulated and sensitive, and keeps sending danger messages. This results in more pain being felt even though the illness or injury is not worsening.

Many other factors can also influence pain perception. These include:

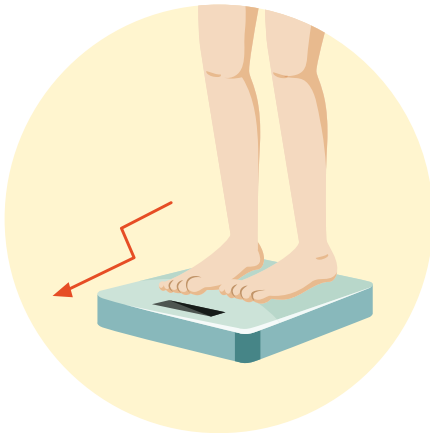
- Stress and mood changes such as anxiety or depression
- Poor sleep and unhealthy lifestyle
- Your beliefs and understanding of your condition



When should I seek help for pain?

You should consult a doctor if these develop:

- Pain that does not improve with rest or simple painkillers
- Severe pain that is affecting your sleep or activities
- Significant numbness, weakness or tingling sensation in the arms or legs
- Swelling, redness or severe pain affecting multiple joints
- Persistent pain after a recent trauma or fall
- Pain accompanied with fever, night sweats or swelling
- Difficulty controlling urination or bowels
- Pain with unexplained weight loss





Unexplained weight loss



Night Sweats








Common myths and misconceptions about pain

 MYTHS	 FACTS
Pain is part of ageing.	Not every older person is in pain, and not all ageing concerns are about pain.
The amount of pain I suffer is the same regardless of my weight.	Losing weight can help ease pain. This is especially true for low back pain and knee pain.
Smoking can help ease pain.	Smoking actually aggravates pain as it increases the firing of danger signals to the brain.
'No pain, no gain' is the way to exercise.	It is more important to remain active and exercise within your own pain limits instead of pushing yourself.
Some people have higher pain thresholds.	Pain is subjective and depends on a person's sociocultural circumstances, ethnicity, past experiences and personality. A person with anxiety or depression is likely to perceive pain worse than someone who is cheerful and optimistic.
Medications can cure pain.	Depending on the condition and type of medication, most medications only help to reduce pain. Exercise, lifestyle changes, and stress management would help with pain.



What are some ways to manage pain?

Your doctor or physiotherapist will find out more about your pain and manage accordingly.

Medications	Physiotherapy	Counselling and pain education
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mild to moderate pain is often treated with paracetamol, muscle relaxants or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)• For more severe pain, the doctor may prescribe stronger painkillers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate exercise program can often improve your pain and regain your normal function• Physical modalities such as Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) and Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy can also help to relieve your pain and promote recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent pain can significantly affect one's social well-being and mental health• Relaxation and behavioral therapy can also help address psychological and social factors that are associated with chronic pain• Having the appropriate knowledge about your condition and pain will aid coping with the pain
Lifestyle changes	Treat the cause of the pain	
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is also important to adopt lifestyle changes and good habits like getting enough sleep, light exercise, stop smoking, good nutrition and maintaining a healthy weight, which can ease chronic pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your doctor or physiotherapist will find out more about your pain through history and examination, and sometimes with investigations, and provide the necessary treatment accordingly	

[illegible]

Note:

[illegible]