



**Pain Management Unit  
Ipswich Hospital**  
Tel: 01473 703436



**East Suffolk and  
North Essex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Understanding Your Pain session – Managing chronic pain

This information sheet summarises the key information presented during the Understanding Your Pain session at the Ipswich Hospital Pain Management Unit.

Chronic pain is a long-term condition and is caused by a different process in the body from acute pain, so it needs to be managed in a different way. Living with chronic pain is a bit like living with any other chronic (long-term) health condition, like heart disease or diabetes. It may not be possible to get rid of or cure the condition, but it is possible to improve the situation and limit the impact of pain on your life by learning to manage and cope with it effectively.

The aim of managing chronic pain is to discover which things help you calm down the pain signalling. Over time this can help calm the over-sensitive nervous system and reverse some of the knock-on effects of the pain. This helps lower pain levels and make them more manageable, as well as allowing you to be more in control of the pain.

Medication can help with managing pain levels – but it is only part of the picture. Chronic pain is complicated and can have lots of knock-on effects; medical treatment with medication or surgical interventions is usually not enough on its own. We know the best results come when people who have chronic pain use a range of approaches, techniques and strategies to influence and manage their pain. These include both what doctors can offer (medical interventions) and also, importantly, what people can do to help themselves (self-management strategies).

**You can think of managing pain as being like a jigsaw:** one piece (medical treatment) is not enough; you need lots of different pieces (a range of self-management techniques) in order to make up the whole picture.

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If you would like to learn more about these self-management techniques, you can book to attend our Pain Management Information Sessions. There are two sessions, a week apart, which run for 1½ hours each. During these sessions you will find out about techniques, strategies and tips for managing pain, both day-to-day and during ‘flare-ups’.

**For more details, or to book a place, call 01473 703436.**



## Summary

Chronic pain is a long-term condition. It is caused by changes in the pain system which mean that the pain nerves stay 'switched on' and become too sensitive. It does not mean that your body is being damaged or harmed. It is not possible to 'cure' chronic pain – but it is possible to learn to manage and control it so that it becomes more manageable and has less of a negative impact on life. It is also possible to gradually and gently undo some of the 'knock-on' effects of pain on your body and how you feel.

## Further information

### My Live Well with Pain

<https://my.livewellwithpain.co.uk>

### The Pain Toolkit

<https://www.pain toolkit.org/>

### Flippin Pain

<https://www.flippinpain.co.uk>

## Your experience matters

We value your feedback. Please help us improve our services by answering a simple question, in our online survey – “Overall, how was your experience of our services?”

This survey is known as “The Friends and Family Test”.

You can either scan this QR code with a smart phone camera:



Or type the following web address into your browser:

[www.esneft.nhs.uk/get-involved/your-views-matter/friends-and-family-test/](http://www.esneft.nhs.uk/get-involved/your-views-matter/friends-and-family-test/)

Thank you very much.

Please ask if you need this leaflet in an alternative format.

Issued by:  
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