



## What Is Chronic Pain?

Chronic pain is pain that occurs regularly over a long period of time.

## What Causes It?

### Nerves signal pain

Computers have an operating system and are attached to devices with wires, and they require special programs to make them do what you want them to do. Like a computer, your body has a nervous system, and it sends messages through your wires (nerves). Pain is a signal from your body that travels to your brain through your nerves when you hurt yourself.

Sometimes these signals are very important. If we break a bone, our brain will tell us that we need to see a doctor. Other times, the signals are not important. Our brain gets thousands of signals every second. To prevent it from overloading, it has to shut some of these signals off. That is what happens when we forget that we are wearing our glasses on top of our head. But other times, these pain signals can start working too well and can't be turned off, which is why you may have chronic pain.

### Fear of pain

Fear is one of our basic instincts. When we are scared, our body releases adrenaline, which is a chemical that takes over our nervous system. You feel pain more when your adrenaline is high. We have another instinct called "fear of pain." It keeps us safe if we hurt ourselves. For example, we don't keep walking on a broken leg and hurt it even more. Fear of pain also worsens chronic pain by increasing adrenaline. This stops us from moving around and doing things that could actually help to relieve our pain.

The Pain Management Team will give you tools and tips that help train your nervous system to respond differently to chronic pain. We will try different treatments to reset the computer in your body to help you have a much better quality of life.