



Building a pain management plan

Chronic pain is one of the most common medical conditions, affecting over 50 million Americans.

This brochure will help you learn more about setting treatment goals and different treatment options.

Opioid safety information

- **Naloxone** can prevent opioid overdose for patients and household members.



- **Store opioids safely.** Place opioids in a secure location. Don't share your medications with others.



- **Dispose of unused opioids.** Get rid of these opioids in disposal bins at pharmacies or police stations, medication take back events, or in activated charcoal bags (like Deterra).



Find a drop-off location at:
bit.ly/dropoff_locator



Set a treatment goal

The most sensible aim of treating chronic pain is enabling you to function at your best—**not** totally eliminating all discomfort. Think about these questions to help determine your goal:

1. If you were better able to do one thing for yourself, what would it be?
2. What activities do you need help to perform that you'd rather be able to do for yourself?
3. What are your concerns about functioning at work, home, or in leisure activities?
4. What could help you be more independent?



Talk to your healthcare professional to establish your specific goals.

Treatment options

A combination of medication and non-medication options may be needed.

Non-medication options

Many different non-medication treatments can provide meaningful benefits.

- **Movement-based activities:**

- aerobic exercise
- resistance exercise
- stretching

- **Mind-body activities:**

- yoga
- tai chi
- mindfulness

- **Psychological approaches**, such as cognitive behavioral therapy

- **Education** about pain and coping



Medication options

Over-the-counter medications like **acetaminophen** (Tylenol) or **ibuprofen** (Advil) may be helpful for some kinds of pain. **Diclofenac gel** may help if you are unable to take oral non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications like ibuprofen.

Some prescription medications such as **duloxetine** (Cymbalta) and **pregabalin** (Lyrica) can help depending on your type of pain. Some opioids like tramadol (Ultram) or buprenorphine (Belbuca or Butrans) may be a better choice than other opioids like morphine or oxycodone.

Understanding the risks and benefits of opioids

Opioids (such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, and others) are powerful pain medications.

If opioids are an option, your health care professional will talk with you to assess the possible benefits and risks of these medications.



BENEFITS

- Opioids can help for short-term severe pain.

RISKS

- **Opioids may not work in the long-term.**
- **Common side effects from opioid medications include** constipation, unsteadiness on your feet, nausea or vomiting, or itching.
- **More serious risks include** overdose (which may be fatal), addiction, falling and breaking a bone, or an increased risk of infections like pneumonia.

This material was supported by the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, the New Hampshire Department of Public Health, the Georgia Department of Public Health, the Montgomery County Pennsylvania Department of Health and Human Services, the Indiana Department of Health, and the Marion County Public Health Department, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A prior version of these materials was supported by the Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly (PACE) Program of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

These are general recommendations only; specific medical decisions should be made by the treating clinician based on an individual patient's clinical condition.

AlosaHealth.org

