

YOUR VALUES  
YOUR PREFERENCES  
YOUR CHOICE

Allina Health 

# Considering Your Non-opioid Options for Pain

*Self-Care, Spinal Manipulation, Physical Therapy, Acupuncture and Pain Rehabilitation*





# Managing Your Pain: Options

## Pain

If you had surgery or are recovering from an illness or accident, it is normal for you to have pain. Pain can come on suddenly or last a long time. You can feel it all the time or it can come and go.

Severe pain affects every part of your life: eating, sleeping, work, interests and relationships. It can cause you to be stressed, depressed, tired or angry.

Your health care team will help you manage your pain.

**Important:** If you are trying to manage pain on your own, talk with your health care provider. You will decide, together, how to manage your pain.

## Activity and managing your pain

Activity is an important part of your recovery. Stay active and do as many of your regular activities (walking, household chores) as you can. Moving around will help prevent problems, such as blood clots or constipation (unable to have a regular bowel movement).

## Options besides prescription pain medicine

Your health care provider may talk with you about if you should take a prescription pain medicine for a few days. They will explain the benefits and risks (including addiction).

You have other options for managing your pain. They may include:

- self-care (pages 3-4 and 6)
- spinal manipulation (pages 4-5 and 6)
- physical therapy (pages 5 and 7)

- acupuncture (pages 5 and 7)
- pain rehabilitation (pages 5 and 7).

Talk with your health care provider about what you have already tried and how it worked.

## Self-care

Self-care is an important way to manage your pain. It includes treatment options you can do on your own. Your goal is to return to your normal activities as soon as possible.

Taking an active role in managing your pain is the most important thing you can do to feel better faster.

Check with your insurance provider about coverage for self-care activities.

Some types of self-care include:

- mild aerobic exercise**  
These are physical activities you do to stay active and strengthen your muscles. These activities include walking, swimming, pool exercises and tai chi.
- heat or warm pack**  
Heat or a warm pack reduces pain by causing your blood vessels to open. This increases oxygen flow to help ease stiff joints and sore muscles.  
  
Use heat or a warm pack no more than one time every hour for 15 to 20 minutes at a time. Place a clean, dry towel between your skin and the heat or warm pack. If the area starts to feel numb, this option is not right for you. Do not use heat or a warm pack on an area that has a wound.
- ice or cold pack**



# Treatment Options (continued)

Ice or a cold pack reduces discomfort and swelling (inflammation) by numbing nerve endings.

Use ice or a cold pack no more than one time every hour for 15 to 20 minutes at a time. Place a clean, dry towel between your skin and the ice or cold pack.

## **medicine**

Over-the-counter pain relief medicines may reduce your pain. This type of medicine includes ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®), aspirin or naproxen (Aleve®). If you cannot take these, take acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Talk with your health care provider before starting any new medicine.

## **breathing and relaxation**

Some easy breathing exercises can reduce stress. This helps increase blood flow to your muscles and lower your heart rate and blood pressure. Relaxation techniques are shown to increase mood and reduce feelings of stress.

## **therapeutic massage**

This treats the skin and soft tissues of your body to promote relaxation and enhance health and healing. Massage helps to reduce pain, anxiety, muscle tension and stress.

## **yoga**

This uses meditation, breathing techniques and gentle movement to relax your body and mind. Yoga helps to reduce pain and relax your muscles.

There are different types of yoga. If a yoga position causes new or increased pain or discomfort, stop. Talk with your health care provider about your pain. You may need to change your treatment plan.

## **get enough sleep**

Get at least 7 hours of sleep each night. Getting enough sleep at night can help you be more alert during the day and help your body deal with pain.

## **quit using tobacco**

Do not use tobacco products. They can slow your body's ability to heal, make it harder to manage your pain and cause other treatments to not work as well.

## **Spinal Manipulation**

Spinal manipulation can be done by a chiropractor or doctor of osteopathic medicine. Osteopathic medicine treats the whole body – not just what aches or hurts.

The doctor will use gentle hands-on adjustments to detect and treat pain. These adjustments may include stretching or applying gentle pressure and resistance in the area of pain. This may help lower pain and improve your movement.

Your doctor may:

- teach you lifestyle changes to improve your posture and movement (lifting, reaching, getting in and out of bed)
- teach you home exercises to increase your flexibility and improve the movement of your joints
- recommend other therapies to help your muscles, joints and nerves work properly and lower pain.

Chiropractic is used with self-care and may also be used with other treatment options. Check with your insurance provider about coverage for chiropractic visits.

# Treatment Options (continued)

## Physical Therapy

Your health care provider may recommend you use physical therapy. Physical therapy focuses on improving the way your body moves and feels. It uses exercises and lifestyle changes. This can decrease your pain and strengthen your body.

During physical therapy, you may:

- use exercises to strengthen your muscles
- learn lifestyle changes to improve your posture and movement (lifting, reaching, and getting in and out of bed)
- stretch your muscles and spine
- use hands-on movements of your bones and soft tissue to improve your movement
- develop skills of the mind to better manage your pain.

You may do some of these exercises at home on your own.

Physical therapy is used with self-care and may also be used with other treatment options.

Check with your insurance provider about coverage for physical therapy.

## Acupuncture

Your health care provider may recommend you use acupuncture. Acupuncture focuses on restoring the flow of energy (Qi) within your body to help your body heal itself and reduce pain. Qi (pronounced “chee”) is energy that moves through your body along channels. When you are healthy, the Qi moves freely.

During acupuncture, you will have fine, sterile acupuncture needles gently placed into your skin. These needles balance the body’s Qi, bringing pain relief.

Acupuncture is used with self-care and may also be used with other treatment options. Check with your insurance provider about coverage for acupuncture.

## Pain Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation therapies and classes will show you how to reduce pain, avoid or stop using opioids, avoid surgery and help you return to normal activities. Options include:

- aerobic exercise in the warm water pool and on land
- meditation, tai chi and yoga
- ways to cope with pain and other problems such as insomnia, stress, anxiety and depression
- how to not use opioid pain medicines.

These therapies may be offered in group or individual settings.

# Benefits and Risks

	Benefits	Risks
<b>Self-care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ long-term or short-term pain relief</li> <li>■ more active role in your treatment</li> <li>■ no surgery or prescription medicine</li> <li>■ helps your body heal and recover (increases oxygen flow, reduces swelling, and relaxes muscles)</li> <li>■ makes you able to do more physical activities</li> <li>■ releases endorphins (your body's natural pain relievers)</li> <li>■ can start treatment as soon as pain begins</li> <li>■ may prevent pain from happening again</li> <li>■ may prevent or lessen long-term pain</li> <li>■ get better faster</li> <li>■ do treatment on your own</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ incomplete or conflicting treatment plan if you do not tell your health care providers the self-care option(s) you are using</li> <li>■ injury when doing a self-care activity wrong or without guidance</li> </ul>
<b>Spinal manipulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ long-term or short-term pain relief</li> <li>■ more active role in your treatment</li> <li>■ no surgery or prescription medicine</li> <li>■ helps your mind and body by using your body's natural ability to heal itself</li> <li>■ makes you able to do more physical activities</li> <li>■ releases endorphins</li> <li>■ learn ways to improve your body posture and manage your pain</li> <li>■ may correct back alignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ incomplete or conflicting treatment plan if you do not tell your health care providers you are using this option.</li> </ul> <p>It is important to talk with your health care provider before you start or change the doses of vitamins or herbal or natural products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ short-term discomfort (feeling pain, tired or sore) in the area that was treated or away from the treated area</li> </ul>

# Benefits and Risks (continued)

	Benefits	Risks
<b>Physical Therapy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ long-term or short-term pain relief</li> <li>■ more active role in your treatment</li> <li>■ no surgery or prescription medicine</li> <li>■ helps your body (builds muscle strength and increases your heart rate and blood flow)</li> <li>■ makes you able to do more physical activities</li> <li>■ releases endorphins</li> <li>■ learn ways to improve your body posture and manage your pain</li> <li>■ increased independence and safety during everyday activities</li> <li>■ tailored treatment plan to fit your needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ incomplete or conflicting treatment plan if you do not tell your health care providers you are using this option</li> <li>■ feeling tired or sore</li> <li>■ short-term increase in pain</li> </ul>
<b>Acupuncture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ long-term or short-term pain relief</li> <li>■ no surgery or prescription medicine</li> <li>■ helps your mind and body by using your body's natural ability to heal itself (reduces stress in your body and relaxes your mind)</li> <li>■ releases endorphins</li> <li>■ tailored treatment plan to fit your needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ incomplete or conflicting treatment plan if you do not tell your health care providers you are using this option.</li> </ul> <p>It is important to talk with your health care provider before you start or change the doses of vitamins or herbal or natural products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ short-term tingling, warmth or discomfort at the acupuncture points</li> </ul>
<b>Pain Rehabilitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ long-term pain reduction</li> <li>■ increased abilities to do your normal activities</li> <li>■ increased confidence to manage pain without opioids or surgery</li> <li>■ improved mood and sleep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ incomplete or conflicting treatment plan if you do not tell your health care providers you are using this option</li> <li>■ short-term increase in pain</li> <li>■ some insurance providers do not cover this option</li> </ul>

# Comparing Your Options

Check the box next to any important items you prefer to help you compare the options.

Self-care	Spinal Manipulation	Physical Therapy	Acupuncture	Pain Rehabilitation
<input type="checkbox"/> do treatment on your own	<input type="checkbox"/> meet with a health care provider. May make lifestyle changes and do some exercises on your own.	<input type="checkbox"/> meet with a health care provider. May make lifestyle changes and do some exercises on your own.	<input type="checkbox"/> meet with a health care provider	<input type="checkbox"/> meet with a team of health care providers who coaches you on ways to manage your pain
<input type="checkbox"/> can start treatment as soon as pain starts	<input type="checkbox"/> may not start treatment for several days after pain starts	<input type="checkbox"/> may not start treatment for several days after pain starts	<input type="checkbox"/> may not start treatment for several days after pain starts	<input type="checkbox"/> may not start treatment until after many months after pain starts
<input type="checkbox"/> can do treatment as many times as you need during the day	<input type="checkbox"/> fit chiropractic visits into your routine	<input type="checkbox"/> fit physical therapy sessions into your routine	<input type="checkbox"/> fit acupuncture visits into your routine	<input type="checkbox"/> daily visits that simulate your normal life activities
<input type="checkbox"/> may use self-care as needed before and after your pain is managed	<input type="checkbox"/> often have a specific number of chiropractic visits to manage your pain and may have chiropractic visits as needed after your pain is managed	<input type="checkbox"/> often have a specific number of physical therapy sessions to manage your pain	<input type="checkbox"/> often have a specific number of acupuncture visits to manage your pain and may have acupuncture visits as needed after your pain is managed	<input type="checkbox"/> has a specific number of daily visits with after care once a month for 4 months
<input type="checkbox"/> may use over-the-counter medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> may use vitamins, herbal or natural products, or both	<input type="checkbox"/> no medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> may use vitamins, herbal or natural products, or both	<input type="checkbox"/> may use medicines that are not opioids

\_\_\_\_\_ = Total

\_\_\_\_\_ = Total

\_\_\_\_\_ = Total

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Count the number of boxes you checked. The options with the most checks may be the best options for you.





# Next Steps

## Questions for Your Insurance Provider

It is important for you to understand your health care benefits before you begin treatment.

Please call your insurance provider and find out exactly what is and is not covered under your plan, and how much you have to pay yourself. Look for the telephone number on your membership card.

1. Will this treatment be covered for my medical condition?
2. Are there specific requirements or criteria that my treatment or I must meet to receive coverage?
3. How long is this treatment covered?
4. Which health care providers are in network?
5. Does my health care provider need to monitor how well this treatment works for me to continue receiving coverage?
6. How much will I need to pay for this treatment?
7. Other questions: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Notes

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# Worksheet: Your Past Treatments for Pain

What treatments have you used?	When and how long have you used them?	How well have they worked?







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Spanish: ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-877-506-4595.

Hmong: LUS CEEV: Yog tias koj hais lus Hmoob, cov kev pab txog lus, muaj kev pab dawb rau koj. Hu rau 1-877-506-4595.



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