



Paediatric Chronic Pain Service

Information for Patients and Families



What is chronic pain?

Pain is an unpleasant feeling sent from our body's warning system that protects us from danger or injury. For example, we experience pain when touching a hot stove to tell us to move our hand away. Our nerves send loud signals to our brain so that we listen, take action and stay safe. Pain is a great protective motivator to get us to take action!



Bodies are very good at recovering from injury and it's usually all done in about three months. Sometimes though, our body's warning system becomes over protective and continues to send signals long after injury has healed. This is what we describe as chronic or persistent pain, when the pain has continued for a long time after the expected recovery period.

Our pain system has become like a faulty alarm that has been left on and gets triggered more and more often. The most important thing to understand is that the pain is very real and not imagined!

How common is chronic pain in children?

It is estimated that approximately 1 in 4 children and teenagers experience chronic pain. Headaches, abdominal pain, complex regional pain syndrome and musculoskeletal pain are some of the common types of paediatric chronic pain.

Children with other underlying health conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease (IBS) and juvenile idiopathic arthritis may also experience chronic pain.*

What can impact chronic pain and how do we treat it?

Sleep, exercise, our mood and many other things can influence how much pain we experience. Experiencing pain though can make our routines tricky and can lead to problems with school, sleep, mood and relationships. The whole experience can be stressful, frustrating even. With the right treatment plan and a team of health professionals, most young people have a positive recovery and can get back to normal.

Treatment involves re-training our body's pain system. The aim is to help you feel in control rather than the pain controlling you. Some ways we can do this are to:

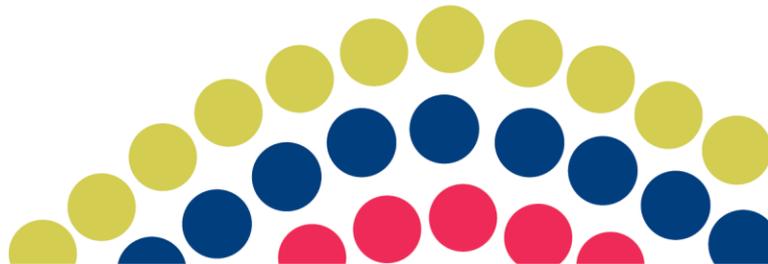
- > Learn about the pain system and how our body feels pain
- > Help you get back into normal routines and doing the activities you enjoy
- > Help you gradually move your body more and more
- > Give you strategies to cope with and reduce pain
- > Explore ways to better manage the stress you may feel from living with pain

Our Team

We have an excellent team of dedicated health professionals who work together to provide strategies to start your recovery journey and get back to living a normal life. Our team includes:

- > Clinical Coordinator
- > Physician
- > Physiotherapist
- > Clinical Psychologist

*Friedrichsdorf, S., Giordano, J., Desai Dakozi, K., Warmuth, A., Daughtry, C., & Schulz, C. (2016). Chronic pain in children and adolescents: diagnosis and treatment of primary pain disorders in head, abdomen, muscles and joints. *Children*, 3(4), 42.



How can a Physiotherapist help with pain?

A physiotherapist is interested in helping you move your body safely and comfortably. Gradually moving your body more and more helps it feel more comfortable. Movement keeps your bones and muscles strong and helps to make you feel happy and energised.

The physiotherapist can help you by:

- > Understanding how far and well you can move your joints and muscles
- > Planning ways to increase your movement and doing activities that you enjoy
- > Teaching you about pain and talking to you about any worries you might have about movement
- > Improving your strength, balance and coordination
- > Providing movement and stretches to use at home to help make your body stronger
- > Help you set and reach a physical activity goal



How can a Physician help with pain?

A physician will start by asking lots of questions about your pain and the types of things that might be affected including school, your daily routine and medication. You will also be asked what kinds of things you think make your pain better or worse.

The physician wants to figure out what can be done to help you to have control and will work out a plan with the team to give you skills to manage better on your own. In some cases, the physician may be involved in managing medication and other health issues that you may have.

How can a Psychologist help with pain?

Experiencing chronic pain is often a stressful experience and can make it challenging to do activities that you enjoy. A psychologist can help you by:

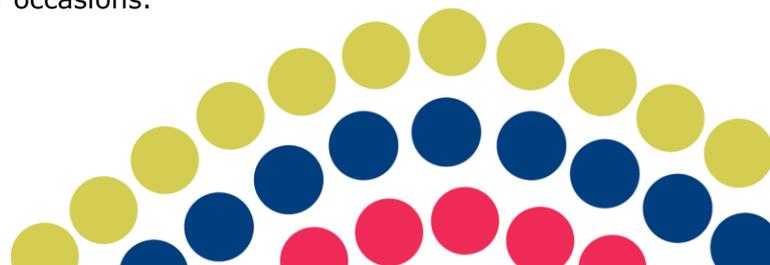
- > Talking to you about how your pain might get in the way of your routines and everyday life including school, physical or social activities and sleep.
- > Giving you skills to help you to cope with pain and feel more relaxed
- > Talking to you about your thoughts or worries and providing you with some helpful ways to address them.
- > Help to improve your mood and reduce any stress and anxiety.

Treatment Pathway

Although each child's journey through our service may be different, below is an example of a treatment pathway:

1. Multi-Disciplinary Assessment and Planning

The chronic pain service begins with a multi-d clinic to meet our team and to help us develop a plan that is specific to your needs. This appointment typically includes the clinical coordinator, physician, psychologist and physiotherapist. This group of important people are your own personal team who are working together to help you. During this appointment the team will all ask questions together to save you repeating your story on lots of occasions.



After a short break they will then talk with you to develop an individual plan. The team are very happy to answer any questions that you might have and address any concerns.

2. Treatment

Based on your plan you will begin appointments with some or all of the health specialists on the team. We try to keep these close together to start with because it helps to give you information and strategies to progress on your journey.

3. Review

Along the way we may set up an appointment to review the treatment progress and discuss the next steps.

4. Discharge

This occurs when we think you are managing better, maybe working independently or with community professionals. We will also send out a final set of questions after 6-months so we can check on how you're going.



Quotes

Here are some comments made by young people and parents that have come to our pain service:

"I was at my lowest at this point. Mum insisted that I saw the pain clinic at the hospital so gave it a go and honestly I haven't looked back. My understanding on pain is so much better now. I'm not afraid of pain. I'm not ashamed of it...I remember the first ever meeting with them and I was just so upset and had no energy to get better but now I am so much stronger physically and mentally."

- 16 y/o Female

"They just made everything easy to understand and gave (my daughter) some things that she could go and take away with her for life...They are really good people and made (my daughter) feel comfortable straight away"

- Mother of 15 y/o Female

"The pain is easier to manage because of the help they have given us...They can help you get through it and it's not the end of the world"

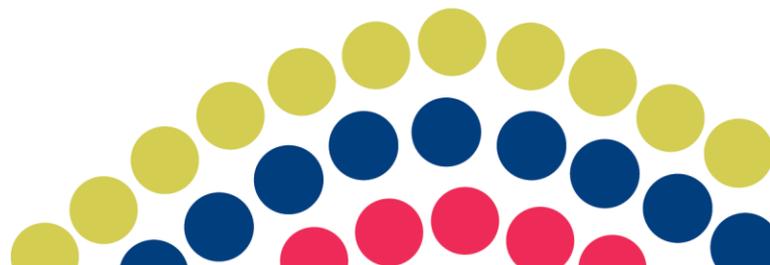
- 15 y/o Female

"The pain service has definitely been a life saver for us!"

- Mother of 16 y/o Female

"There are so many good days, the good days far, far outweigh the bad days and when I do have a bad day that is perfectly fine... It really is a matter of finding what works for you because there are a lot of strategies"

- 17 y/o Male



Resources

Here are some great resources to help you to understand chronic pain and to learn some tips and strategies to manage your pain. We recommend having a look at some of them but don't expect you to get through it all!

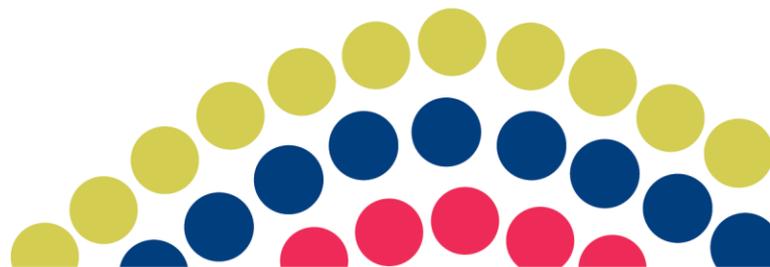
Videos

- > [Understanding Pain in Less than 5min and What to Do About It!](#)
- > [Tame the Beast \(5min\)](#)
- > [Persistent Pain Explained in 3min](#)
- > [The Mysterious Science of Pain- Joshua W. Pate \(5min\)](#)
- > [Ted Talk- Lorimer Moseley 'Why things hurt'](#)
- > [The Secret World of Pain – BBC Documentary \(55min\)](#)
- > [You are the boss of your pain! \(13min\)](#)
- > [How we can retrain our brain? Watch video explaining pain and Neuroplasticity](#)
- > [A young person sharing her experience with pacing activity to manage chronic pain \(2min\)](#)



Online Learning Activities

- > [Comfort Ability Program](#)- Excellent online resource with videos, blogs, resources and information that is monitored by trained professionals
- > [PainBytes](#)- Videos and Interactive Activities to help understand and manage pain
- > [ImaginAction](#)- Free audio guides to help with pain, sleep and more!
- > [Arthritis SA](#)- Short online courses to help you understand paediatric chronic pain (free)
- > [My Care Path](#)- Online program with videos and modules to help understand and manage chronic pain
- > [Pain Toolkit](#)- Useful resource for young people with chronic pain
- > [Controlling your gut feelings](#)- Abdominal pain resources
- > [Fun slideshow explaining what causes chronic pain](#)



Books

(Many available from Noi group-
<http://www.noigroup.com/en/Home>)

- > Explain Pain- *G Lorimer Moseley and David S Butler*
- > Explain Pain Handbook: Protectometer- *G Lorimer Moseley and David S Butler*
- > When Your Child Hurts- *Rachael Coakley*
- > Painful Yarns – *Lorimer Moseley*



Apps

- > Smiling Mind (Free)
Meditation and mindfulness for all ages
- > Headspace: Meditation and Sleep (Free with in App purchases)
Guided meditation and mindfulness to use for a few minutes a day or to help with sleep
- > Insight Timer (Free with in App purchases) Meditation to help manage sleep and stress
- > Stop, Breathe & Think (Free with in App purchases)
Guided meditation and mindfulness (suitable for tweens, teens and adults)
- > Stop, Breathe & Think Kids (Free with in App purchases)
Fun meditation and sleep activities for kids aged 5-10
- > Protectometer by Noigroup (\$14.99)
Tools to help understand and treat chronic pain (Only compatible for iPads)
- > Recognise by Noigroup (\$9.99 each)
Using graded motor imagery to reduce pain and improve movement
- > Daylio (Free with in App purchases)
Personal mood and activity tracker
- > Moodpath: Depression and Anxiety (Free with in App purchases)
Track and reflect on thoughts and emotions with activities to improve well-being.

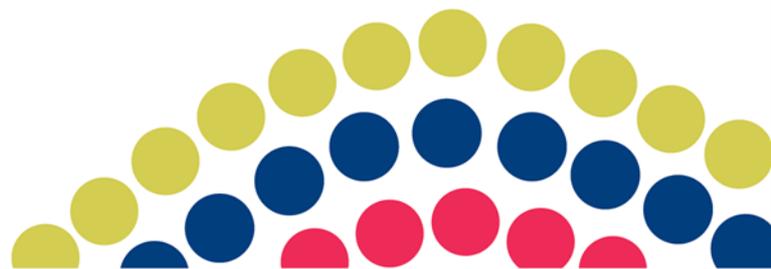


Paediatric Chronic Pain Service
 Women's and Children's Hospital
 72 King William Rd, North Adelaide SA 5006

Telephone: 0481 900 577
 Email: Health.PaediatricChronicPainService@sa.gov.au



www.ausgoal.gov.au/
 creative-commons



Government
 of South Australia
 Women's and Children's
 Health Network



Women's
 & Children's
 Hospital