

# Do You Have Chronic Pain?



Chronic pain is pain that lasts more than 3 months. If you are experiencing chronic pain, there are many treatment options available to you.

One option is opioid treatment. Opioids are a group of powerful and potentially addictive pain medications. Use caution when taking opioids and ask your doctor what treatment plan is best for you. Opiates can become addictive in a short period of time.

## TREATMENT PLAN

If your doctor prescribes opioids, you should work with your doctor to come up with a treatment plan.



### Assess your risk factors.

- Do you have a history of substance abuse?
- Have you used high dosage opioids before?
- Are you able to manage your own care?



### Establish treatment goals.

- These can include pain relief and general daily functions.



### Decide how you will track and measure treatment progress.

- Schedule regular follow up appointments with the doctor. You should be seeing your doctor frequently when you are on opioids, to see if you need to stay on them or not.
- Track your ability to carry out daily tasks. This can include walking your dog down the street, around the block or even a mile.



### Develop a plan to stop treatment.

- If you suddenly stop using opioids, your body can go into withdrawal. This can lead to unwanted and possibly dangerous side effects. To avoid this, slowly lower your dosages. Do this only under the care and direction of your doctor.

## COMBINED TREATMENT OPTIONS

Opioid treatment is most effective when it is combined with one of the following:

-  **An exercise routine.** Regular exercise can relieve you of pain. Moving helps, so keep active.
-  **Physical therapy.** Certain exercises, targeted to your specific area of pain, can help you build strength and regain function.
-  **Over-the-counter pain medications.** Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen can sometimes be used instead of opioids and do not carry the risk of addiction. They are generally well tolerated when used correctly. Follow your doctor's instruction or ask your pharmacist for help with the labeled directions. These products are over-the-counter and available at most grocery and drug stores.



Superior HealthPlan wants to help you stay healthy and get you the care you need. We want to help you understand and actively manage your health. If you have a medical question and cannot reach your doctor, we can help. Call Member Services to access our 24-hour nurse advice line.

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