



# Understanding Chronic Pain

FIPMSSUI No: 4.0

Date of issue: August 2012

Date of review: August 2014

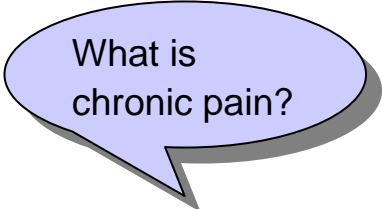
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e.g. Braille, easy read or audio please contact the Equality and Diversity Team at:

[fife-uhb.equalityanddiversity@nhs.net](mailto:fife-uhb.equalityanddiversity@nhs.net) or telephone 01383 565142

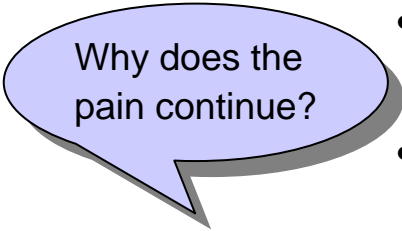
## Understanding Chronic Pain

- Have you had pain for longer than 3 months?
- Have you got pain that interferes with day to day life?
- Do you have pain that doesn't go away?
- If so you may have **chronic pain**.



What is chronic pain?

- Chronic pain is very common and affects up to 1 in 7 people. It affects some people more than others.
- Chronic pain is pain that has gone on longer than 3 months. This is because most injuries heal in this time. However even after healing you can continue getting pain.
- Chronic pain can also begin without injury.
- Some people describe chronic pain as causing unbearable suffering that causes disruption to daily life including work, family life, interests and social life.

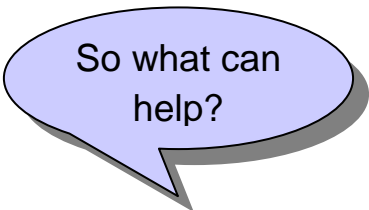


Why does the pain continue?

- The latest research indicates that the body's alarm system is at fault. It is sending more messages than it needs and not enough helpful messages that reduce pain.
- X-rays and scans do not always show a cause of pain even if the pain is severe. Accepting a negative result in a positive way should reassure you that you are OK and unlikely to have a serious problem.

### Summary

Chronic pain is more common than most people think. It can cause large amounts of suffering and disruption in your life but is rarely due to serious harm or damage. Investigations do not always give a reason for pain but they can rule out other serious problems.



So what can help?

- It is what you do that is most important
- Quite often waiting for a cure or a fix is frustrating. It is unlikely that any Doctor or health professional will make the pain go away.
- The other leaflets in the Fife Integrated Pain Service series give you sound, evidence based advice on how to manage your pain. See 'How to Self Manage your Pain', 'Pain and Exercise' and 'Pain and Sleep'.

Further information and resources are available on:

- <http://sites.google.com/site/fifepaininfo/>
- [www.painassociation.com](http://www.painassociation.com)
- [www.painconcern.org.uk/](http://www.painconcern.org.uk/)
- Access to the internet is also freely available at your local library.