



ACPA[®]

American Chronic Pain Association

PAIN FACT SHEET

Pain touches each one of us at one time or another. Pain can begin for many different reasons. Yet as common as pain is, the medical community is just beginning to understand and better address the many forms of pain.

Acute pain has a distinct beginning and end and is the result of illness or injury. This type of pain usually, can be largely relieved with appropriate treatment, as can cancer pain. It is important that the pain be taken seriously and managed as part of sound patient care. Currently there is no cure for chronic pain and, as a condition that can affect individual's life long; it also needs to be taken seriously. A multidisciplinary treatment approach can help people with chronic pain regain control of their lives and reduce their sense of suffering.

CHRONIC PAIN FACTS

- Chronic pain lasts. Pain is considered chronic when it continues beyond the usual recovery period for an injury or an illness. It may be continuous or come and go.
- Chronic pain, sometimes called persistent pain, can be very stressful for both the body and the soul and requires careful, ongoing attention to be appropriately treated.
- Chronic pain is often intractable, as the cause of pain cannot be removed or treated.
- Chronic pain is the number one cause of adult disability in the United States.
- Chronic pain can touch nearly every part of a person's daily life. It also has an impact on the family, and, because of its economic and social consequences, it affects us all.
- Chronic pain can be a source of frustration for the health care professionals who seek to provide care and assistance.

Incidence

The American Chronic Pain Association (ACPA) estimates that one in three Americans (approximately 50 million people) suffers from some type of chronic pain.

NEXT PAGE>>



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Causes of Chronic Pain

- Lower back problems, arthritis, cancer, RSDS, repetitive stress injuries, shingles, headaches, and fibromyalgia are the most common sources of chronic pain. Others include diabetic neuropathy, phantom limb sensation, and other neurological conditions.

ACUTE PAIN FACTS

- Acute pain may be mild and last just a moment. It also can be severe and last for weeks or months, as does pain from a burn, pulled muscle, or broken bone.
- Acute pain has a distinct beginning and end. The cause of acute pain is known and, as you heal, the pain will lessen and finally go away.
- Acute pain usually starts suddenly, may be sharp, and often triggers visible bodily reactions such as sweating, an elevated blood pressure, and more. Acute pain is generally a signal of rapid-onset injury to the body, and it resolves when pain relief is given, or the injury is treated.
- Pain should be considered the fifth vital sign, along with respiration, pulse, blood pressure, and core temperature.
- Most of the time medication and other treatment can greatly relieve acute pain. Pain management is an important part of effective total care.

Incidence

- Muscle pain, one of the most common types of acute pain, affects 53 percent of Americans.
- Lower back pain is the most common form of acute pain and is the fifth most common cause for all physician visits. It is responsible for direct health care expenditures of more than \$20 billion annually.

Causes

- Acute pain is triggered by tissue damage such as a skin burn, muscle pain, or a broken bone.
- It's the type of pain that generally accompanies an illness, an injury, or surgery.
- Acute pain can manifest in just about any part of the body.

Learn more at **www.theACPA.org**