



Tips on healthy ageing

Managing Pain

Many people suffer with pain, particularly chronic pain, which does not respond to routine medical treatment. Here are some suggestions to help manage your pain better.

1. First make sure your pain symptoms are not an early warning of an acute illness. Learn more about the cause(s) of your chronic pain by consulting your doctor who can suggest potential management strategies. Learning more about your condition may help reduce fear and anxiety.
2. Use of pain-relieving medications is one management strategy. Taking 'pain-killers' regularly, rather than when the pain is 'bad', can enable you to stay active and maximise your quality of life. Medical doctors are trained in the use of these medications.
3. Friends and family are your greatest supports. Appreciate them, keep in touch and maintain healthy relationships with them.
4. When we are upset, fearful, anxious, lonely or tired, pain can become worse. Think about what aggravates and what helps to relieve your pain. It may be helpful to consider ways to improve your sleep (see Tips for Sleeping Well) or take time to learn relaxation techniques and stress management. A psychologist may be able to help.
5. Therapeutic exercises can strengthen the healthy parts of your body to support the integrity of the whole. Stretching, strengthening and aerobic exercises can decrease pain, increase your abilities and improve your mood. A physiotherapist may be able to help.
6. There are also aids that can help with pain. Just as cold packs can be an aid to an acute musculoskeletal injury, heat packs (not too hot!) can be an aid to a chronic musculoskeletal injury. A walking stick and other mobility aids can help with managing pain on movement. Portable Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) machines assist some people to think less about pain, while maintaining activities. An occupational therapist or physiotherapist may be able to provide guidance on these therapies.
7. A variety of therapies may be more effective than one. Even more traditional or complimentary therapies, such as massage or acupuncture, may relieve pain.