



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Pain Management: Dealing with Chronic Pain in Children and Teens

Dealing with chronic pain can be challenging for people of any age and their families. Unfortunately, as families try to cope with daily pain, they may develop unwise habits. These habits can lead to a long-term cycle of chronic pain. Along with good management of pain and stress, the following ideas can help your family break the cycle of chronic pain.

What your child or teenager can do

Before asking for help, both children and teens should first try to do their usual tasks, such as schoolwork and chores, as much as possible. This helps them to be independent.

Sleep is very important. Your child or teen should keep a regular sleep schedule as much as possible, going to bed at the same time each night and getting up at the same time in the morning. Older children and teens should not nap during the day because it may make them less sleepy at night.

If it is safe for your child or teen to go to school, they should attend every day, even if they can only be there for part of the day.

Physical activity can help to manage chronic pain. Non-impact aerobic exercise in the morning can help improve sleep and mood while decreasing pain. Examples of non-impact exercise are:

- Walking
- Biking
- Elliptical trainer
- Swimming



Picture 1 Activity can help manage pain.

How you can help

- Ask about your child's or teenager's **plans** instead of their pain.
- If you see your child or teenager in pain, ask how you can help.
- Provide treatment for your child or teen if they are not able to talk about their pain.
- Try to stay focused on what can be done to help.