



Video transcript: what is chronic pain?

Intro

This is a video about chronic pain

If this sounds a bit grim, don't worry...

Chronic pain can be treated, and there's lots of things you can do every day to help with chronic pain!

But first, we should probably talk about what pain is overall.

Main content

Have you ever broken your leg?

People can break their legs all kinds of ways - like playing sports with your friends...

Or maybe just falling down. Either way – “ouch!”

You probably felt pain right away, and you may also have felt some pain while the injury healed.

That pain was unpleasant, but it actually protected you. It told you that you had a real injury, and it kept you from making that injury worse.

The pain signal went from your leg to your brain through a nerve pathway.

And your brain responded by telling you to stay off your hurt leg until it healed all the way.

So, one good function of pain is to protect you from harm in the future. Pain is your brain's way of saying...

“Hey- that really could hurt! Don't do that again!”

And you'll probably be a little more careful next time.

Usually, if you have an injury that causes pain, your pain goes away when the injury heals.

So with that broken leg, you might have had pain that lasted for a few weeks or a month or 2, but then went away.

Pain that goes away when the injury is healed is called acute pain. But chronic pain is different.

Chronic pain doesn't go away, even after the injury has healed, and you still feel it most or all of the time.



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If you have pain for 3 months or more, without a cause that doctors can fix, that's chronic pain.

The other thing that's different about chronic pain is that sometimes there's no physical injury or clear explanation for how the pain started.

Doctors might do different tests and scans, but they can't always find an exact problem to fix. This type of pain doesn't protect you.

So why does this happen?

Good question, let's go back to that broken leg again.

The pain signal traveled through a nerve pathway from your leg to the brain...

...but only until your leg healed.

With chronic pain these nerve pathways in your body and brain can stay "on" all the time.

Scientists who study how pain affects the brain, have found that pain can become linked to thoughts and feelings you have.

For example, let's say you sit in an uncomfortable chair at work all day, and it causes pain – well just thinking about work can cause you to feel pain.

Emotions, memories, stress, and even places can cause you to feel pain.

And people who have been through trauma, severe stress, or have mental or emotional health problems have a higher chance of having chronic pain.

Pain can make your mental health worse, while poor mental health can make your pain worse.

So, it's important to think of pain as both physical and psychological.

You know, a lot of people have chronic pain. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or the CDC, 1 out of every 5 adults in the U.S. has chronic pain.

That's 50 million people – more than the total population of Texas and Florida combined.

And that's not all. 19 million adults in the U.S. have chronic pain that is so severe it keeps them from doing things they need to do, like going to work or doing household chores.

Experts call this "high-impact chronic pain". People with high-impact chronic pain sometimes need help taking care of themselves, and they have a higher chance of other health problems as well.

You might be wondering, "but what does chronic pain actually feel like?"



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Well, people experience chronic pain as headaches, backaches, pain in their knees or other joints, or muscles that hurt or feel sore.

Pain may feel like a dull, throbbing ache, or a sharp, burning or stabbing sensation.

Chances are, you know someone who lives with chronic pain. Maybe you even have it yourself. But remember – there's hope!

Outro

Many of the most effective treatments for chronic pain are things you can do every day, like walking, getting more sleep, and eating healthier.

Want more tips to help with chronic pain? Our next video is exactly what you need!

Visit www.beyondpainstl.com.