

Chronic pain in older adults

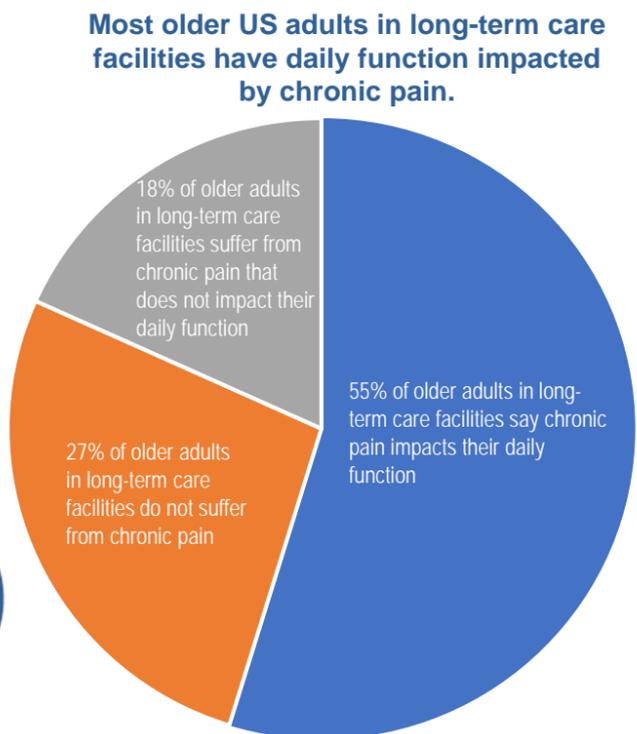
The likelihood of experiencing chronic pain increases with age. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 15% of Americans over the age of 65 use a prescription pain relief drug. This infographic provides information about chronic pain in older adults and strategies for treating chronic pain.

What is Chronic Pain?

Pain can either be acute (short lasting) or chronic (persistent, lasting more than 3 months) and can be accompanied by depression and anxiety.

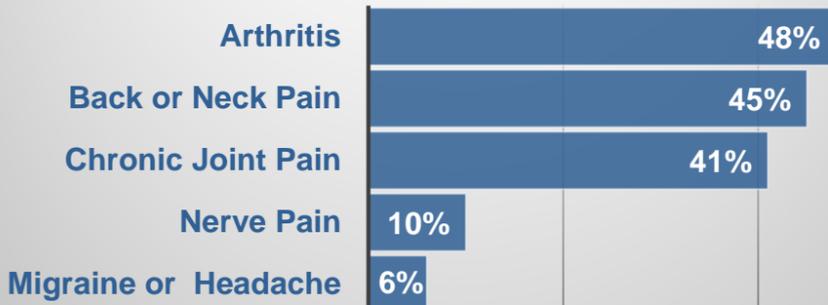
Did you Know?

An estimated 65% of US adults over the age of 65 report suffering from pain and up to 30% of older adults report suffering from chronic pain.



Adapted from Ferrel et al. J Am Geriatr Soc. 1990

Percentage of older Americans suffering from chronic pain conditions



Adapted from Di Bonaventura et al. J. Pain Res. 2017 and Blackwell et al. Vital Health Stat 2014.

Preventing and Treating Chronic Pain

Studies show acupuncture can improve function in patients suffering from neck pain.



Physical activity can reduce pain and improve function in patients with chronic low back pain and osteoarthritis.

Prevent or Relieve Pain by:

Maintaining a Healthy Weight | Getting Enough Sleep | Avoiding Tobacco

Important Information About Pain Medicines

Using medicine at the first sign of pain may help control pain now and later.

Some medicines used to treat pain are:

- ❖ Acetaminophen
- ❖ Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs
- ❖ Narcotics

- With aging, the risk of side effects associated with medicines increases.
- Talk with your doctor if you take multiple medicines or have other chronic conditions.
- Only take the dose of medicine prescribed by your doctor and in the form prescribed.
- Contact your doctor if you cannot swallow pills.
- Make sure your doctor knows how much of every medicine or supplement you take and how much alcohol you drink.
- Ask your pharmacist about any side effects of your medications and when you should speak with your doctor about them.

Complementary & Integrative Approaches for Chronic Pain include:
Acupuncture | Massage Therapy | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy | Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Did you know?

Someone with Alzheimer's disease may not be able to tell you they're in pain. Look for signs such as facial expressions, mood and behavior changes, or sleep disturbances which may indicate someone is in pain. See www.nia.nih.gov/health/pain-you-can-get-help for more information.

Learn More:

Chronic Pain in Older Adults: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/pain-you-can-get-help>
 Complementary & Integrative Health Approaches: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/pain/chronic.htm>
 Caregiving: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving> | <https://eldercare.acl.gov/> | <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-respite-care>