

Your Roadmap to Treating Your Pain

Don't face your pain alone! You can tackle it head-on with a care team that includes your doctor and pharmacist. This guide will give you tips to help you navigate care with confidence.



FINDING A DOCTOR

Need help determining which doctor is best to address your unique pain? Check out this list of types of doctors and the pain they treat.

Pain Specialists



Pain specialists specialize in treating pain and the conditions that cause chronic pain.

Orthopedic Specialists



Orthopedic specialists treat conditions that impact your bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, and muscles.

Rheumatologists



Rheumatologists treat arthritis, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, and tendonitis.

Physiatrists or Rehabilitation Doctors



Physiatrists or rehabilitation doctors treat conditions that affect how you move without surgery. They may also treat post-surgery pain.

Osteopathic Doctors (DO)



Osteopathic doctors are primary care / family medicine doctors who focus on the joints, muscles, and spine. They can refer you to a specialist should you need more specialized care.

Certain types of complementary and alternative medicine offer unique approaches to pain management. But it's important to discuss these options with your doctor first.

Acupuncturists



Acupuncturists treat pain using very thin needles placed strategically on the skin.

Chiropractors



Chiropractors treat problems related to the musculoskeletal system, commonly the spine. Treatment usually involves manual therapy.

Need help finding a doctor in your area? Tools like [ZocDoc](#) are easy to use and can help you find a perfect match based on your needs, location, and insurance type.



When preparing for an upcoming doctor's appointment, don't forget to use The Pain Equity Project resources [Describing and Documenting Your Pain for Care](#) and [How to Advocate for Yourself in Medical Settings](#).



NAVIGATING THE PHARMACY

When pain strikes, it sets us on a quest for relief, often leading us straight to the doors of the pharmacy. Check out these helpful tips to prepare for your next trip and communicate with your pharmacist.

Identify your symptoms. Pay attention to signs and drug labels that match the type of pain you’re experiencing. A topical cream for arthritis may be in a different section than oral tablets for migraine.

Read the medication label. Over-the-counter pain medications are generally safe and effective. But it’s essential to be mindful of their proper usage and warnings to prevent unwanted consequences.¹

When filling a prescription from your doctor, **avoid visiting multiple pharmacies to fill your medications**, and always bring your **Prescription (RX) Insurance Card**.

Lastly, **don’t be afraid to ask for help**. The pharmacist and pharmacy staff can answer your questions and help you select the best product to meet your needs.

Reading Over-the-Counter Medication Labels

Don’t let medication labels intimidate you! Understanding how to read them empowers you to use your medications safely and get relief.

<p>Drug Facts</p> <hr/> <p>Active Ingredient</p> <p>The part of the medication that brings the desired relief from your symptoms.</p>	<p>Drug Facts (continued)</p> <hr/> <p>Directions</p> <p>A specific guide on how to take the medicine. It includes how much to take, how often, and how long. Taking too much or too little can lead to an undesirable response.</p> <hr/> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>e.g., adults and children</td> <td>take 2 tablets daily</td> </tr> </table>		e.g., adults and children	take 2 tablets daily
e.g., adults and children	take 2 tablets daily			
<p>Uses</p> <p>The disease, illness, condition, or symptom the medicine will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ treat or ■ manage 	<p>Other Information</p> <p>Extra information if certain products need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ special care ■ storage or ■ handling 			
<p>Warnings</p> <p>A list of precautions to consider before taking the medication.</p> <p>e.g., If pregnant or breast feeding, ask a health professional before use. Keep out of reach of children.</p>	<p>Inactive Ingredients</p> <p>Additives in a medication that give it certain qualities like color or texture. Take note of the inactive ingredients to be aware of any potential allergic reactions.</p>			

Remember, your pharmacist is your trusted ally. They can help you select a product that is effective for your type of pain and avoid unwanted side effects.

References

[1] Hersh, E. V., Moore, P. A., & Ross, G. L. (2000). Over-the-counter analgesics and antipyretics: A critical assessment. *Clinical Therapeutics*, 22(5), 500–548. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0149-2918\(00\)80043-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0149-2918(00)80043-0)