

5 ways to... MANAGE CHRONIC PAIN



Nearly half of us will suffer at some point in our lives from chronic pain — which is pain that lasts for more than three months. Here, TV's Dr Hilary Jones gives his tips on how to manage it...

Oral and topical medicines

There are many oral and topical medicines that you can take, such as over-the-counter painkillers. However, these are often not strong enough, in which case, prescribed medicines are needed.

Intense ultrasound therapy

A new device called Actisound uses ultrasound to treat chronic pain injuries like tennis elbow painlessly and quickly. It works beneath the surface of the skin — precisely delivering small thermal ablations to tendons, ligaments, and other

soft tissue to stimulate collagen growth and the regeneration of connective tissue.

Acupuncture and trigger point injections

Stimulation of particular acupuncture points can affect areas of the brain that reduce sensitivity to pain and stress.

Alleviating exercises

You can practise alleviating exercises under the direction of a physiotherapist,

who will assess your pain and give you a personalised exercise plan to address your particular needs.

Meditation and mindfulness

This can help to focus your mind away from the pain. Studies show that mindfulness soothes the underlying pain of brain patterns and, eventually, these changes can alter the structure of the brain so that patients no longer feel pain with the same intensity.

Who Knew?
A third of young people abstain from alcohol, and the proportion of them who have never tried it has almost doubled in the past decade.



Ask Dr HELEN

Q WHAT IS THIS RINGING IN MY EARS?

Sometimes it's so bad it makes me cry. I've seen a doctor and he said I just have to put up with it.

A Ringing, or sometimes buzzing or humming, in the ears is called tinnitus. It's not always possible to find a cause and for most people it gets better with time as your brain learns to screen out the noise. There

are treatments available, including special aids that mask the sound, so ask for a referral to a specialist.

Q SHOULD SHE BE VACCINATED?

Chickenpox was rife at my daughter's school so I assumed she would get it, but she didn't. Should I get her vaccinated?

A Chickenpox vaccination is not given to all children in the

UK, only to those in close contact with someone with a weakened immune system. Nearly all children will catch chickenpox at some stage and it is usually a much milder illness in children than in adults — so mild that it's possible your daughter had just a few spots without you knowing.

Q SHOULD I TRY HYPNOSIS TO LOSE WEIGHT?

I've tried every diet, yet I still need to lose two stone.

A Some people do find hypnosis useful in changing their eating habits. There isn't much research to tell us exactly how well it works, but it won't harm you — although it can be expensive.

Q WHY IS INTERCOURSE SO PAINFUL?

My husband and I have been trying to conceive, but for the last few months sex has started to hurt and it's stopping me wanting to be intimate.

A It's important to find out why sex is painful. It can be because of a simple infection such as thrush, which is easily diagnosed and treated. If sex has been painful in the past, fear of pain makes it difficult to relax, which makes sex painful again. Talk to your partner and take things very gently.

● Dr Helen cannot answer your questions personally. If your symptoms are urgent or painful, please see a doctor.

Email medical questions to tab.helen@bauermedia.co.uk, or write to Dr Helen, *Take a Break*, FREEPOST LON12043, H Bauer Publishing, London NW1 1YU

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