

### **Why should we try and minimise use of medications for chronic pain?**

All medications have a chance of some side effects, however these are particularly noted with opioids (e.g. codeine and morphine). Side effects include: constipation, nausea, drowsiness, dizziness and hallucinations.

Furthermore, when taking pain medications for a long period, your body may build a greater tolerance to the drug and its effectiveness at the same dose may decrease. This can lead to increases doses of the medication to manage your pain.

There is also a small risk of addiction to opioids, however this is unlikely when used carefully in pain management. If you are worried about addiction, please contact us at Holland House Surgery.

### **What to do if you want to try and reduce the dose of your pain medications?**

Make sure you speak to your GP before adjusting the dose of any medications. Your GP will help guide a reducing dose routine to reduce the risk of any withdrawal symptoms, particularly from opioids.

### **What if I am Still Struggling?**

Never suffer in silence. Always contact us at Holland House Surgery if you are struggling to cope with your chronic pain.

If you are struggling to manage your chronic pain and find this is having an impact on your daily activities despite trying various treatment options, we can discuss referral to a specialised pain clinic. This service is not available to everyone with chronic pain and does depend on certain criteria. It is run by a group of healthcare professionals who specialise in helping you manage your pain, by providing various treatments and pain management techniques.

# **Chronic Pain Management**

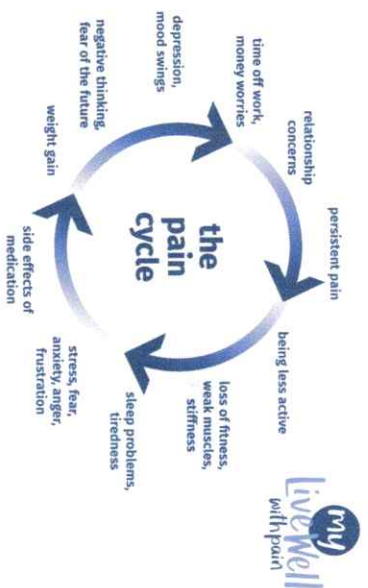
## **Alternatives to Medication**

**Holland House Surgery  
Patient Information Leaflet**

## What is Chronic Pain?

Long-term pain as a result of a chronic condition, or pain continuing for more than 3 months beyond the usual recovery period of an illness or injury. Chronic pain can have a huge impact on a person's daily life and be extremely difficult to manage.

Chronic pain can result in a challenging cycle highlighted in the image below.



## Medications used for Chronic Pain

Medications are commonly used to treat acute pain. However, it has been shown that medication can only play a part in chronic pain management, and will not entirely relieve it. Therefore, medication for chronic pain aims to reduce symptoms enough to allow you to continue with daily activities, and take part in other pain management techniques that in combination can keep your pain under control.

## 5 Alternatives to Medications

**1 – Gentle Exercise** – Gradually increase your activity levels & try to be active every day! It is completely normal to be worried about exercising when you are in pain, however if you increase your activity levels gradually it is unlikely to do any harm, and in the long-term it will be beneficial. If you are struggling to get active or are suffering from an injury, please get in touch to discuss referral to a physiotherapist.

**2 – Look after your mental health** – Dealing with chronic pain can create huge challenges in your life, and as previously mentioned you can find yourself in a downhill pain cycle. It is not easy to live with chronic pain, and it is okay to ask for help.

Better mental health can directly help your physical symptoms by improving your ability cope with pain, and by allowing you to access other pain relieving strategies.

Take a look at this NHS website to find out more about improving your mental wellbeing: <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

If you think speaking to someone about your mental health may help, please get in touch with us at Holland House Surgery, or you can get in touch directly with Mindsmatter online at

<https://www.lsct.nhs.uk/services/psychological-therapies/mindsmatter>

**3 – Relaxation** – Practicing relaxation techniques, from breathing techniques to meditation, can help reduce persistent pain. This can help you relax and allow you to feel more in control, which can prevent any unnecessary anxiousness and tension which can make your pain worse.

**4 – Talk to other people** – Keep in touch with your friends and family, even if your pain limits this to a short visit or phone call, it will make you feel much better.

You may also find it helpful to speak with like-minded people who also experience chronic pain. S.M.I.L.E is a support group based in Preston offering weekly group meetings and hosting activities for people with chronic pain. You can find out more at: <https://smilepreston.co.uk/>

**5 – Understand your Pain** – You may find it easier to cope with your chronic pain if you understand more about your condition. There are various websites that offer information on chronic pain, take a look below:

<https://www.britishtainsociety.org/people-with-pain/patient-publications/>

<https://www.paintoolkit.org/>

<https://livewellwithpain.co.uk/>

<https://painconcern.org.uk/self-management/>