

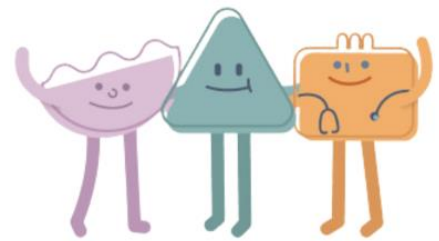
YOUTH AND CHRONIC PAIN

1 in 5 children experience chronic pain (SKIP Solutions for Kids in Pain, n.d.). Living with chronic pain is not easy. You may feel unsure of where or who to turn to for help. At times, you may feel that nobody believes you or understands your experience, but chronic pain is very real and often invisible. Chronic pain can get in the way of your sleep, physical activity, school participation, spending time with friends, and other important parts of your life. **However, you are not alone in your journey to cope with pain, and there is support available.** The following information, support tools, and resources can help you.

WHAT IS CHRONIC PAIN?

Chronic pain is pain that persists or recurs for longer than three months or beyond the expected time frame for normal healing. Chronic pain may be associated with medical conditions, but it is also present when medical investigations, like blood tests or imaging, are reported to be normal. Chronic pain becomes complex when that pain starts to disrupt other aspects of life, like your sleep, energy levels, mood, school performance, school attendance, social interactions, and family dynamics. For more information about chronic pain, you may consider visiting the following:

- MyCarePath: mycarepath.ca
- The Comfort Ability® Program: thecomfortability.com
- Power Over Pain Youth Portal: popyouth.ca
- PainUOnline: tapmipain.ca/patient/managing-my-pain/pain-u-online



TREATING CHRONIC PAIN

The biopsychosocial model of pain is an approach to understanding pain that considers the multiple factors that affect and contribute to the experience of pain. Factors that influence pain include the **biological** (i.e., medication, nutrition, physical activity, etc.), **psychological** (i.e., emotions, mood, coping skills, etc.), and **social** (i.e., leisure activities, family support, friends, school, etc.) aspects of our lives. **To best treat chronic pain, we need to address ALL aspects of ourselves.**

Pediatric chronic pain treatment around the world has the goal to help children and youth better manage their pain so they can lead a more balanced life. They use the **3Ps (Psychology [mind], Physiotherapy [movement], Pharmacology [medications]) approach** which can help manage the biopsychosocial factors contributing to chronic pain. The 3Ps primarily focus on improving “function,” which means your ability to meaningfully participate in day-to-day life despite the pain. Focusing on function through a gradual return to your important activities and working towards goals, rather than focusing on pain, is crucial in managing chronic pain.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Be an active participant in your pain treatment. “Self-management” of chronic pain refers to actions and strategies you can take to take control of your pain and its impact. Here are some examples of steps you can take towards better pain management:

Learn about chronic pain and / or your diagnosed medical condition. Learning about chronic pain generally and/or your diagnosed medical condition can help you make informed decisions, with your caregiver(s) and healthcare team, about your treatment plan.

Learn about self-management strategies. Learn day-to-day strategies you can use to manage your pain such as improving sleep, pacing, movement, and stress management. Setting and working towards meaningful functional goals can also be very helpful.

Participate in your healthcare. Be actively involved in your treatment planning. Participating in your care may look like:

- Scheduling regular check-ins with your primary care practitioner and/or specialist.
- Being prepared for your healthcare appointments by tracking your symptoms and writing down your questions or concerns ahead of time.
- Bring your caregiver(s), or trusted adult, to your medical appointments for support.
- Taking notes and confirming next steps at the end of your medical appointments.

Seek the support of others. Talk to a trusted adult in your life such as a parent, caregiver, relative, teacher, school counselor, Elder, Traditional Healer, or Spiritual Leader about your feelings and experiences so that they can support you on your pain management journey. You may also consider



finding safe ways to connect with others experiencing chronic pain/ similar medical conditions through formalized support groups, events, and/or online forums.

Advocating for your needs. People who are good advocates for their own care tend to get better care. Being a good self-advocate may look like:

- Requesting a referral to a specialist (i.e., pain specialist) or other health care professional (i.e., occupational therapy, social workers, physiotherapists, etc.).
- Requesting accommodation(s) with your school to help optimize your academic achievements (i.e., creating an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), accessing an Occupational Therapist, etc.).
- Caring for your mental health.

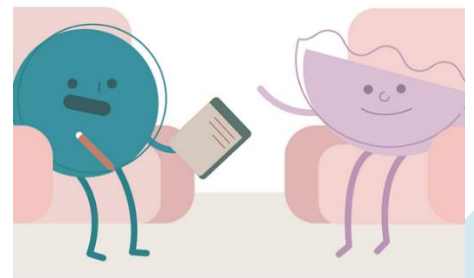
SUPPORT FOR CHRONIC PAIN

These additional resources may be supportive in helping you manage your pain:

- BC Children’s Hospital, Complex Pain Service: bcchildrens.ca/clinics-services/pain-and-comfort-management (referral required)
- Empowered Relief® (For Youth): paincanada.ca/resources/empowered-relief
- MSOP: Online (Youth): painbc.ca/msop
- Solutions for Kids in Pain (SKIP): kidsinpain.ca
- SickKids, Pain Learning Hub: aboutkidshealth.ca/pain
- iCanCope: icancope.ca
- Mary Pack Arthritis Program: vch.ca/en/services-and-resources/mary-pack-arthritis-program-mpap
- Cassie + Friends: cassieandfriends.ca
- BC Children’s Hospital, On TRAC: ontracbc.ca
- PainBytes: aci.health.nsw.gov.au/chronic-pain/painbytes
- Meg Foundation: megfoundationforpain.org

MENTAL HEALTH AND CHRONIC PAIN

Chronic pain can greatly impact your emotional wellbeing, but you don’t have to manage it alone. There is help available. You may consider utilizing the following suggested resources for support and guidance:



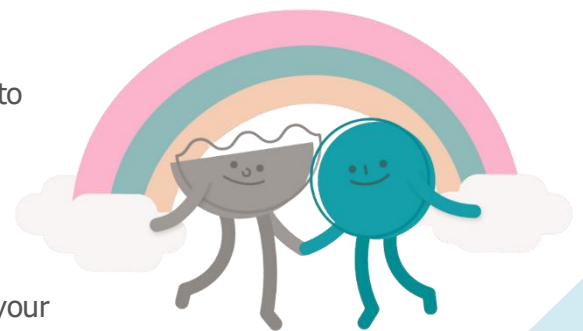
- Seeking support from a trusted adult in your life such as a parent, relative, teacher, school counselor, Elder, Traditional Healer, or Spiritual Leader.
- Identifying and seeking cultural support, such as traditional healing practices or community-based support.
- Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre: Call 1-800-665-1822, email kellycentre@cw.bc.ca, or visit kellymentalhealth.ca
- Foundry: foundrybc.ca
- Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH): gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health
- Canadian Mental Health Association, BounceBack®: bouncebackbc.ca/what-is-bounceback-youth
- MindShift CBT – Anxiety Relief: mindshiftcbt.com
- Smiling Mind: smilingmind.com.au
- HelpStartsHere: helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca

While the above resources can help people work through emotional issues that lead to thoughts of suicide, you need help more urgently if you are in crisis. **For immediate mental health support, you may consider contacting the following:**

- **Kids Help Phone:** 1-800-668-6868, use [online live chat](#), text CONNECT to 686868, or use [Facebook Messenger](#).
- **KUU-US Crisis Line Society** (for Indigenous Child/Youth): 250-723-2040

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS / CAREGIVERS

Being the parent or caregiver of a child in pain can be extremely challenging but, remember that you are not alone! It is important to recognize that chronic pain arises differently in each person, and families play an important role in supporting the management of chronic pain. The following resources may be supportive in helping you both care for yourself and learn strategies to support your child:



- [Pain Support Line](#) (available to parents / caregivers of youth living with chronic pain): Call or text 1-833-261-7246
- MyCarePath: mycarepath.ca
- The Comfort Ability® Program, For Parents/Caregivers: thecomfortability.com/pages/for-parents
- Pediatric pain guide for caregivers, BC Children's Hospital and BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre: cw-bc.libguides.com/pain
- Cassie + Friends, Parent Support Network: cassieandfriends.ca/supportnetwork
- Family Support Institute of BC: visit familysupportbc.com, call 1-800-441-5403, or email fasi@fsibc.com.
- Parent Support Services Society of BC: parentsupportbc.ca

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [HealthLink BC](#): Call 8-1-1
- Pathways: pathwaysbc.ca/login
- Representative for Children & Youth (RC&Y): rcybc.ca
- Child Capacity and Participation in Healthcare Decisions, The Society of Children and Youth of BC: scyofbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/04-RCY_Healthcare_OCT18.pdf
- Autism Information Services BC: Call 1-844-878-4700 or email autisminformation@gov.bc.ca
- Autism Support Network of British Columbia: autismsupportbc.ca
- TransCare BC: transcarebc.ca
- Variety BC: variety.bc.ca
- Better Days Society: betterdaysociety.ca
- CKNW Kids' Fund: cknwkidsfund.com
- Dayforce Cares: dayforcecares.com/ca/apply

REFERENCES

SKIP Solutions for Kids in Pain. (n.d.). *Why children's pain matters*. <https://kidsinpain.ca/why-childrens-pain-matters>

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