

Pain Management News

What is pain management? "The specialty of Pain Medicine is concerned with the study of pain, prevention of pain, and the evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons in pain. Some conditions may have pain and associated symptoms arising from a discrete cause, such as postoperative pain or pain associated with a malignancy, or may be conditions in which pain constitutes the primary problem, such as neuropathic pains or headaches. The evaluation of painful syndromes includes interpretation of historical data; review of previous laboratory, imaging, and electrodiagnostic studies; assessment of behavioral, social, occupational and avocational issues; and interview and examination of the patient by the pain specialist."

"The pain physician serves as a consultant to other physicians but is often the principal treating physician and may provide care at various levels, such as direct treatment, prescribing medication, prescribing rehabilitation services, performing pain relieving procedures, counseling patients and families, directing a multidisciplinary team, coordinating care with other health care providers and providing consultative services to public and private agencies pursuant to optimal health care delivery to the patient suffering from pain. The pain physician may work in a variety of settings and is competent to treat the entire range of pain encountered in the delivery of quality health care."

American Academy of Pain Management. (2005). About AAPM: *Definition of Pain Medicine*. Retrieved August 18, 2005 from American Academy of Pain Management Web site: <http://www.painmed.org/about/>

Rx help may be on the way - Patient assistance programs made easier by various sources. For a \$5.00 enrollment fee patients can have "Integrity Meds" assist them in the process of applying for patient assistance. 800-861-3627. There are other sources that will assist for a fee and are searchable by state at www.needymeds.com.

www.rxhope.com

www.rxassist.com

www.pparx.org

www.rxoutreach.com

Rx

assistance



Low Back Pain Evaluation

Urgent

- * unrelenting night pain or pain at rest
- * fever 100.4F for >48 hours
- * pain with distal numbness and/or weakness of legs
- * loss of bowel or bladder control
- * progressive neurological/neuromotor deficit

Urgent lumbar spine X-rays

- * significant trauma
- * possible cancer
- * osteoporosis
- * chronic steroid use
- * drug or alcohol abuse
- * suspicion of ankylosing spondylitis

Non-urgent but needs evaluation

- * history of injury
- * past history of back symptoms
- * back pain duration >6 weeks
- * unexplained weight loss
- * history of cancer

Treating Low Back Pain (LBP)

Conservative treatment of LBP

- * cold packs or heat
- * acetaminophen or NSAIDS
- * consider muscle relaxants
- * limit bed-rest (2-4 days)
- * activity modification (maintain non-stressful activities)
- * physical therapy
- * educate patient on activities, staying active is part of rehabilitation

Active rehabilitation for LBP

- * multidisciplinary approach
- * exercise program
- * develop good body mechanics
- * gradually resume normal activities
- * medication management
- * interventional procedures - injections
- * physical therapy

Indications for Surgery

- * cauda equina syndrome
- * progressive or severe neuromotor deficit - i.e. foot drop
- * persistent neuromotor deficit after four weeks of conservative treatment
- * chronic sciatica with positive straight leg raising for >4-6 weeks

Pain management rounds. (2005, Volume 2, Issue 2) Available from www.painmanagementrounds.org

Help for sleep without medications - The latest research on how to get a good night's sleep without medications is easy as 1 – 2 – 3. Research shows that there is an increased risk of disease and weight gain from sleeping poorly.

1. **Soothing scents**, such as, jasmine promote a more sound sleep and a decrease in anxiety upon awakening
2. **Keep it dark** – Light sources, such as, bright LED clocks or night-lights can inhibit a restful, uninterrupted sleep.
3. **Put on the classics** – Listening to soft, soothing music before sleeping improves sleep quality and quantity.
4. **Exercise early** – Exercise early in the day or early evening assists in ability to fall asleep. Late night exercise routines (with in three hours of going to sleep) can inhibit the ability to fall asleep.

Gotthardt, Melissa. (2005, July-August). Snooze Control: *AARP – The Magazine*. 15.