

# Tips for Easing Pain in MS

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# Pain in MS

- Up to two-thirds of people with MS have pain.

Neuropathic pain most common.

- Burning, tingling, hot, stabbing, electrical, searing.
- “Weird” sensations.

# Other Causes of Pain in MS

Spasticity – painful muscle contraction

Worse in a.m., with heat or cold, fatigue.

Trigeminal Neuralgia more common in MS

Musculoskeletal

Low back pain, joint pain

Headache - Migraine or tension

# Reducing Pain

- Pain may be reduced but not eliminated.
- Approach from different directions:
  - Meds.
  - Lifestyle.
  - Coping skills.
  - Therapies.

# How & When Does Pain Affect You?

- "Pain Diary"
  - Track if pain is worse in morning, evening?
  - Any related events? Stress, work, family, illness?
  - Level of pain? 1-10 scale or Low-Med-High?

# “With Less Pain, I Could ...”

- Focus on your goals:
  - *“I want to walk to the mailbox and back with pain less than 3/10.”*
  - *“I could fix breakfast for myself.”*
  - *“...take my grandkids fishing”*

# Pain-Management Planning

- Talk with your MS Provider about your pain.
- Discuss your pain diary info – this helps tailor an individual pain-management plan.
- Your goals will help measure how well the plan works, and if/when it needs adjustment.

# Meds to help MS pain

- Antidepressants
- Anti-seizure meds (calm down zappy neurons):
  - gabapentin
  - pregabalin
  - carbamazepine
  - oxcarbazepine
  - topiramate

# Trigeminal Neuralgia

- Carbamazepine
- Oxcarbazepine
- Lamotrigine
- Baclofen
- NeuroSurgical procedure. Often needs to be repeated after few years.

# Opioids

- No clear improvement in function.
- Modest pain relief.
- Side effects: constipation, immune suppression, insomnia, memory impairment, hyperalgesia, overdose.
- Short-term use recommended.

# Migraine

- Headache diary
- “Triptans”
- OTC ibuprofen, naproxen, meclizine.

## Preventive:

- Topiramate
- Petasites (Butterbur) 50 - 75 mg 2 x day.
- Riboflavin (Vit B2) 200 – 400 mg/day.

# What Else can Ease Pain?

- Exercise – not too much, not too little.
- Massage, myofascial release, stretching.
- Yoga.
- Acupuncture.

# Easing Chronic Pain

- Mindfulness, meditation, relaxation practice.
- Counseling.
- You are more than your pain.
- Keep involved with family, friends.
- Humor
- Pets are great companions too.

# Easing Chronic Pain

- Plan for fun and relaxing activities – or try something new!
- Re-focus on life happening now.
- Acknowledge and accept what you can't change.
- Don't let the bad stuff steal your enjoyment of what's going right.

# Tips for Living with MS Pain

- ✓ You are more than your pain.
- ✓ Meds are just 1 part of the plan.
- ✓ Talk with your health team:
  - what's helping and what needs review.
- ✓ Focus on function.
  - set specific goals.

# Tips for Living with MS Pain

- ✓ Exercise: just moving around.
  - enough to challenge, not to exhaustion.
- ✓ Relaxation and real coping skills do help.
  - it takes practice.
  - it will get easier.
- ✓ Keep involved.
  - with family, friends, and activities.

*Thank you.*

