



Paris  
Community  
Hospital  
Family  
Medical  
Center



# Managing Pain

staying  
*healthy*

December 2017

## Non-opioid options available

The opioid crisis in the US has no boundaries, affecting large metropolitan areas and rural communities alike.

Opioids are a class of drug used for managing pain. They include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, and prescription pain relievers, such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin, Norco), codeine, morphine, and others.

Opioids affect nerves in the body and brain and can be highly addictive. Opioid pain relievers are generally safe when taken for a short time and as prescribed by a provider, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). However, because they produce euphoria in addition to pain relief, they can easily lead to misuse, dependence, overdose, and even death.

The NIDA states that chronic pain affects one in three Americans. While there are many treatments for pain, prescriptions for opioid pain relievers have increased dramatically in

recent years – from 76 million in 1991 to nearly 207 million in 2013. Additionally, the number of unintentional overdose deaths from prescription pain relievers has more than quadrupled in the US since 1999.

To combat the rising trend of opioid use to manage chronic pain, NIDA has taken several actions. These include initiating pain management research and exploring alternative approaches to pain management.

According to the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine, non-opioid options are available and should be used whenever possible to manage chronic pain. Some of these medications are available over-the-counter, while others require a prescription. Oral medications include acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ibuprofen), anti-seizure drugs, muscle relaxants, and drugs originally used to treat anxiety disorders. Other pain medications can be applied to the skin in the form of ointments, creams, and patches.

Other pain relief treatments

include exercises performed under the direction of a physical therapist, acupuncture, and chiropractic treatment. Additionally, electrical nerve stimulation using pads placed on the skin (TENS units) may provide pain relief to a specific area.

Another pain treatment/management option is a nerve block injection. Nerve-numbing injections can decrease inflammation or “turn off” a pain signal along a specific nerve. Injections are often used for lower back pain, herniated discs, pinched nerves, sciatica, musculoskeletal pain, and migraines.

Pain management clinics focus on the diagnosis and management of chronic pain, and provide a customized therapy plan specific to a patient's needs. These clinics focus on the entire person, not just the pain. They encourage people to have an active role in managing their pain and regaining control of their life.

PCH/FMC has a pain management clinic staffed by four certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs). For more information, call 466-4226.



Maribeth McCormack, CRNA, APN

Maribeth is a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA)

who helps patients manage pain in the PCH/FMC Pain Management Clinic. She also is part of a team that provides anesthesia services to help patients manage acute surgical pain.

Maribeth joined PCH/FMC in 2015. Prior to that, she worked two years as a registered nurse in the emergency room at Christian Hospital Northeast in St. Louis, and in the intensive care unit at Mercy Hospital in St. Louis.

Maribeth has a master's of science degree in anesthesia from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville and is currently working on her doctorate. She earned her undergraduate, accelerated RN-BSN degree from the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Maribeth enjoys traveling and spending time with family at the Lake of the Ozarks. She and her husband, Tom, have two children: Tommi, 16 months; and Calli, 11 weeks.



## Pain clinics offer options for managing pain

A variety of non-opioid treatments are available for managing pain. Many of these treatments are available through pain management clinics.

These clinics use a variety of non-surgical techniques to help manage acute and chronic pain. Treatments range from injections, which numb a specific nerve and/or reduce inflammation, to ablation, which uses radiofrequency energy to stop nerves from sending pain signals for a prolonged period of time. Each of these techniques directly addresses the source of a person's pain at the nerve itself.

Conditions that generally respond well to these services include knee pain, back pain, sciatica, and cancer. In addition, shingles pain and migraines frequently respond favorably to pain clinic treatments.

According to the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine, the majority of injections for diagnosing or treating chronic pain are performed on an outpatient basis. In many instances, X-rays are used to help guide the injection, while others are

done without X-rays.

The most commonly performed treatments at a pain clinic include the following:

### Lumbar epidural injection

A steroid anti-inflammatory is injected into the lower back to help relieve lower back, buttock, or leg pain (sciatica) using X-ray guidance. Inflammation is decreased around nerves in the spine, typically providing pain relief for several months.

### Lumbar facet injection

These injections can help relieve chronic low back pain. Located around each vertebra in the spine, facet joints connect the vertebrae to one another, stabilizing the spine while allowing some flexibility. The injections are always performed under X-ray guidance and pain relief typically lasts for a few months.

### SI joint injection

Also called a sacroiliac joint block, these cortisone injections are used for hip, low back, or buttock pain. The sacroiliac joint connects the sacrum (triangular bone at the bottom of the spine) with the pelvis on each side of the lower spine. The process involves injecting the sacroiliac joint with a numbing medicine and steroid, which is performed under X-ray guidance for accuracy. Pain relief typically lasts for a few months.

### Genicular nerve block

These injections are for severe knee pain. A local anesthetic is injected onto the genicular nerves, located around the knee cap. The injection can be done before

or after surgery. In some instances, it may help a patient avoid the need for surgery altogether. When the nerve block is successful, a radiofrequency ablation (see below) can be done to provide longer lasting pain relief.

### Radiofrequency ablation

This procedure treats chronic pain in the lower back. It also can be used for arthritic joints and nerve pain. An electrical current produced by radio waves is used to heat a small area of nerve tissue, which disrupts the nerve's ability to send pain signals. This method can provide long-lasting relief for people with chronic pain.

### What to expect on the day of an injection

(This example assumes the patient is having a lumbar epidural injection. The procedure lasts about 30 minutes.)

- The patient lies face down on a table.
- An intravenous (IV) line may be started for sedation if desired.
- A local anesthetic is applied to the skin to numb the treatment area.
- Using continuous X-rays for guidance, a needle is inserted into the skin and advanced to the epidural space.
- Once the needle is in the proper position, a dye is injected to confirm the needle location. The epidural steroid solution is then injected.
- Following the injection, the patient is monitored for 15 to 20 minutes before being discharged home.



# Paris Community Hospital Family Medical Center

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## PCH/FMC's Community Healthcare Programs December & January

### Holiday Closures

#### December & January

PCH/FMC announces the following closures at its Family Medical Centers in Paris, Chrisman, and Oakland, as well as at its EZ Care walk-in clinic:

Monday, Dec. 25—All FMCs closed/EZ Care closed

Monday, Jan. 1—All FMCs closed/EZ Care open 9 am to 7 pm

### Volunteers' Chocolate Sale

#### December 12 & 13

The PCH Volunteers will hold their South Bend Chocolate Company sale from 8 am to 4 pm by the rotunda entrance to the Paris Family Medical Center.

### Monthly Health Screenings

#### January 10

Blood sugar, blood pressure, and lipid panel (HDL, LDL, and triglycerides) screenings will be held from 7 to 9 am. Fasting for eight hours in advance is required. The cost is \$25. To register, call 217-466-4228.