



Pain & Integrative Medicine at The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh

The Pain & Integrative Medicine program at The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh provides children and teens suffering from chronic pain a holistic approach to care that focuses on the mind, body and spirit. The ultimate goal for every child is long-term self-management of chronic pain to achieve a more fulfilling lifestyle.

Chronic pain has a number of diagnoses and causes:

- Reflex Neurovascular Dystrophy (RND)
- Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD)
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)
- Amplified Musculoskeletal Pain Syndrome (AMPS)
- Pediatric Fibromyalgia
- Concussions
- Chronic Headaches/Migraines
- Pediatric Arthritis/Joint Pain
- Functional Abdominal Pain

Our multidisciplinary team utilizes a variety of treatments that can reduce the need for multiple practitioners, invasive procedures and prescription medications. Addressing both physical and behavioral needs through a care plan that focuses on optimizing lifestyle variables such as nutrition, exercise, sleep and stress management, enhances function and improves quality of life for children and teens living with chronic pain and their loved ones.

Directed by a physician specializing in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, the team may also include:

- Physical Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Pain Psychologist/Behavioral Therapist
- Educational Support
- Dietitian
- Accupuncturist
- Massage Therapist



Who Can Benefit:

Our treatment program can help children and teens with chronic pain:

- associated with one or more areas of the body
- that may travel through the body
- caused by something that typically would not be considered painful (for example, a light breeze or wearing clothing)
- that limits daily activities, such as getting dressed
- that limits the ability to walk, stand or grasp something
- that causes them to discontinue participation in activities
- that causes them to miss significant amounts of school or receive home bound education (including cyber school)

Putting integrative health into practice

The Pain & Integrative Medicine program serves kids of all ages with chronic pain, including those families who are exploring treatments outside the typical medical model of care. Physicians and therapists provide physical/medical services to promote increased strength, endurance and agility, breaking the cycle of pain to reduce hypersensitivity.

Behavioral health services offer techniques to identify stressors, pain triggers and warning signals while teaching coping skills and appropriate expressions of thoughts and feelings.

Our Complementary Approach to Treatment

The first step is a comprehensive evaluation by a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation physician. Treatments typically include **physical therapy, occupational therapy, land and aquatic therapy, intense exercise therapy and behavioral therapy**. Complementary mind and body health practices that may be added to enhance these treatments include:

Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT) - Moving muscles and joints by stretching, gentle pressure and resistance

Craniosacral Therapy - Manipulating the joints of the head, spine and pelvis to affect the pressure and circulation of fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord

Myofascial Release - Applying gentle pressure to specific connective tissues (fascia) to relax tight muscles, improve blood flow and increase flexibility

Other approaches that may be included in an integrated treatment plan include:

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Acupuncture | Massage/Reiki/Therapeutic touch |
| Biofeedback | Nutrition /supplements |
| Dry-needling/Trigger point injections | Parent/child education |
| Guided imagery/Relaxation | Yoga therapy |

Program Goals

The Pain Rehabilitation team establishes individual goals for each child, which may include:

- Returning full functionality to the affected area
- Returning to school and daily activities
- Increasing strength, endurance and agility
- Decreasing sensitivity to touch
- Using skills to manage pain and stress

Ultimately, the goal is long-term self-management of chronic pain to achieve an independent lifestyle.

