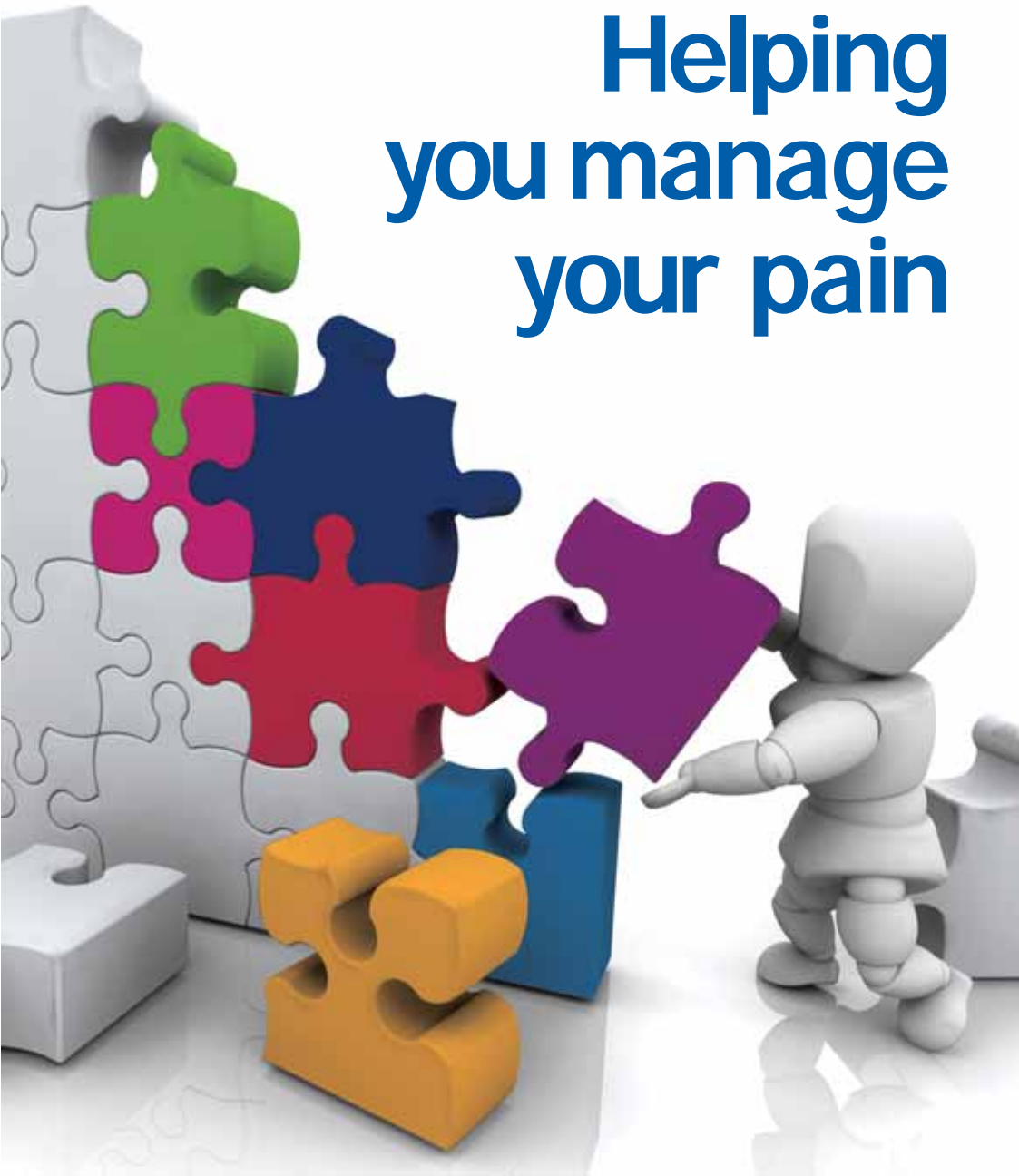


Helping you manage your pain



This booklet contains confidential personal information.
If found, please mail to the address below.

Personal details

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

My health care team (please tick)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General practitioner (GP) | <input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rheumatologist | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pain specialist | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

The information in this booklet is not meant to replace a medical diagnosis. It contains general information to help people with arthritis and chronic pain communicate better with their health professional. For specific diagnosis and treatment you need to see your health professional.

© Copyright National Prescribing Service Limited 2009

Copyright for the text content, document structure, formatting, layout and presentation is held by National Prescribing Service Limited. Permission is granted to view these documents for private or academic use. You may download, display, print or reproduce this material in unaltered, complete form only for personal, non-commercial use or for non-commercial use within your organisation. You cannot redistribute this material without the written permission of National Prescribing Service Limited. The documents and their associated electronic files cannot be mirrored, retransmitted, broadcast or sold without specific written permission from National Prescribing Service Limited.

How this booklet can help you

This booklet is designed to help you discuss your pain with your general practitioner (GP) and other health professionals.

By using this booklet you will:

- understand what pain is
- know what information to take to your GP/health professional
- be better prepared for your GP/health professional's appointment
- be able to track your levels of pain and keep a record of it in a pain diary.

Take this booklet with you to your GP/health professional's visit and show them the recorded information when discussing your treatment plan.



If you use medicines, to get the best outcome from this resource use it with the National Prescribing Service Limited's (NPS) *Medicines List*. You can download a *Medicines List* from www.nps.org.au/medicineslist or place an order to have one sent to you free of charge. If you don't have access to the website, call NPS on 02 8217 8700 to request a *Medicines List*.

Don't forget that medicines include prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines, including herbal treatments, vitamins, minerals and nutritional supplements.



Types of pain

Pain can be acute or chronic (also known as persistent).

Pain is tolerated by each of us in a different way. Measuring pain is not easy.

Acute pain occurs for a short period of time. When the underlying cause is treated the pain will usually go away.

Chronic or persistent pain is continuous and recurrent. It is usually felt on most days for at least three months.

What is arthritis?

Arthritis affects the musculoskeletal system which includes bones, muscles and joints, resulting in pain and stiffness. There are many types of arthritis.

Go to www.arthritisnsw.org.au
for more information

Pain and arthritis¹

Pain in arthritis is caused by:

- **The disease process** — inflammation of the joint (inflammatory arthritis e.g. rheumatoid arthritis) or damage to the joint (degenerative arthritis e.g. osteoarthritis).
- **Tight or tense muscles** — when pain is experienced, it is natural to tense the muscles surrounding the site of pain, protecting the painful body part from movement. Moving the tense muscles, can deplete energy, resulting in fatigue.
- **Prolonged stress response** — this is a combination of a person's physical, emotional and behavioural response to pain. Many people experience emotions such as anxiety, fear, helplessness and depression from time to time. This can lead to trouble with sleeping. You may also notice impacts on your relationships with family and friends. You may notice it affects your work or usual occupation and other recreational/exercise/physical activities.

¹ Arthritis Foundation of NSW (June 2006) "Managing Pain" fact sheet.



- **Attitude of the person** — people can develop pain behaviours which are not always helpful. Spending excessive time in bed can increase pain through disuse and increase feelings of helplessness. However, if a person feels confident that they can do something to control pain, then their experience of pain will be less. This is enhanced by a supportive home/family and work environment.

Information to take to your GP/health professional

First, it is important to understand that you may need to see your GP/health professional a few times to develop a pain management plan.

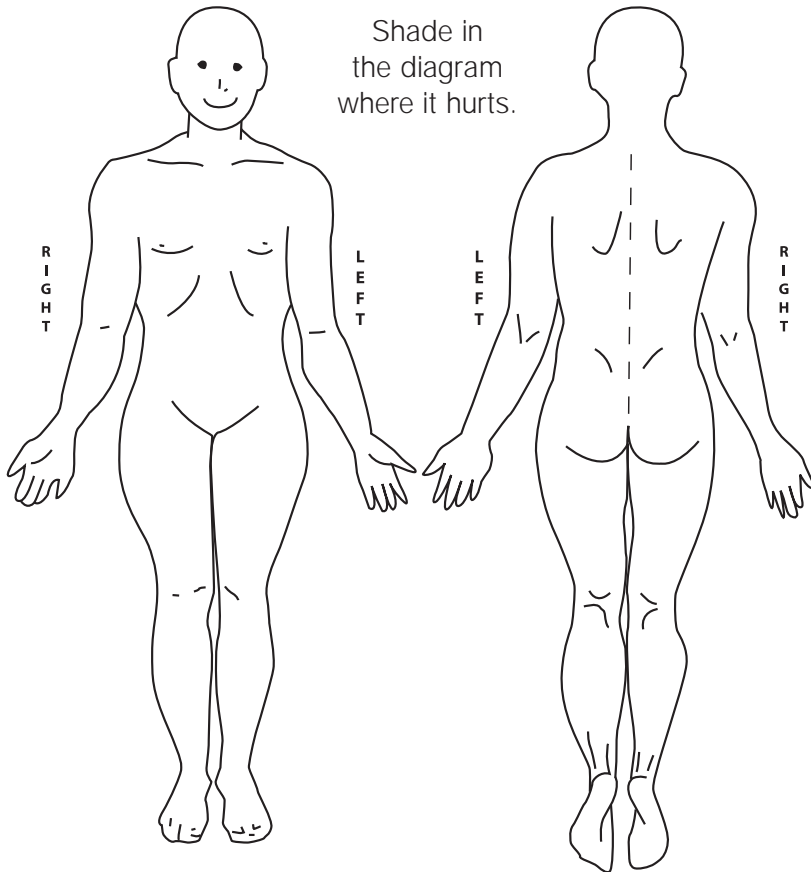
It is important to tell your GP/health professional about your pain, in your own words. In preparing for your first visit to your GP/health professional, use the questions below to help you develop a 'pain story' that can be told in 2–3 minutes.

Build rapport with your health professionals

Assessing pain

- How long have you had the pain?
- Where does the pain occur in your body? (Shade in the diagram² on the next page.)
- Does the pain come and go?
- How did the pain start? For example, suddenly noticed/accident/sports injury/work related etc.
- What do you think the pain means to you? For example, do you believe that the pain is related to your bones and muscles or do you think it has affected other parts of your body?
- As a result of your pain, what can't you do now that you could do before?
- What have you done to relieve your pain so far? Mention what has worked and what hasn't worked to relieve your pain.

² Australian Physiotherapy Association (NSW Branch) Manual Therapy Special Group (June 2009).



Pain pattern

In your words describe your pain. For example,

- What do you feel? For example, aching, sharp, dull, stabbing or pins and needles?
- Does the pain wake you up?
- Are there specific times of the day or night when the pain is worse?
- What helps the pain get better? For example, warm shower.
- What makes the pain worse?
- Do you have days where your pain is not a problem? Give an example.

-
- Diagnosis may take time — this might take several visits to your GP/health professional, various tests or referral to other health professionals.
 - Be an active partner in your management plan.
 - Ask for 3–4 different treatment options and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each, so you can decide what is going to work best for you.
 - Discuss non-medicine treatments e.g. stretch breaks, warm water exercises, physiotherapy etc.
 - If the GP prescribes any medicines, ask them to add it to your medicines list. You can download a *Medicines List* from the National Prescribing Service Limited's website at www.nps.org.au/medicineslist.
 - Ask for a consumer medicine information (CMI) leaflet for your medicine. A CMI gives you important facts to know before, during and after taking your medicine.
 - Make sure you take notes during the appointment (or take someone with you to write down answers).
 - If you are diagnosed with arthritis, know the type of arthritis and ask if up to date information is available for your condition.
 - Discuss the benefits of attending a support group or call Arthritis NSW on 02 9857 3300 or freecall 1800 011 041 or visit our website www.arthritisnsw.org.au.

Having a pain management plan early is important, even if the cause of the pain cannot be found. While following the plan, it is also important to monitor your progress. The following pain diary will help with this.

Learning to relax is important



Managing your medicines

People will experience pain differently and will respond differently to pain treatments. Your pain management may include the use of pain relief medicines. There are a number of important things to talk to your GP or pharmacist about when working out the best pain medicine for you.

Go to www.nps.org.au for information on using medicines safely and wisely

Some questions to ask are:

- Should I take this medicine at regular intervals or only when I feel pain?
- How long will it take to work?
- Is it safe to use in the long term?
- Will this medicine make me feel drowsy?
- What side effects should I expect or watch out for?
- What can I do to minimise the side effects?
- How will this medicine interact with my other medicines?
- How will this medicine affect my other health conditions?
- Could I become dependent on this medicine?
- What should I do if the pain doesn't go away or it gets worse?
- When should I come back for a review?
- What alternative kinds of pain medicine or management should I consider?

Your pharmacist is a good source of information on the medicines you take

Pain diary

Recording your pain

Maintaining information about your pain and how it affects your lifestyle will help you, your GP and other health professionals understand any patterns. This will help them work with you to manage your pain better.

Please complete the following table for each day, for 7 days in a row. It's a good idea to maintain the record for at least one week. The record will also help monitor the progress of treatment and any patterns of improvement.

To fill in the table, it is important to write a score between 0–10 three times per day, (morning, afternoon and night) to get a better understanding about how your mood level, sleep level, physical activity, pain medicine effectiveness and frequency affects your pain.

For example, to show how intense your pain is, it is important to rate your pain. A zero (0) means no pain, and ten (10) means worst possible pain. Select one number that best describes your pain:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No pain										Worst possible pain



Additional copies of the pain record can be printed from the Arthritis NSW website at www.arthritisnsw.org.au or the NPS website at www.nps.org.au/consumers/manageyourpain. Alternatively please photocopy pages 9 to 11 for continued use or call Arthritis NSW on 02 9857 3300 or freecall 1800 011 041 for further copies.

Please use scoring from 0-10 for pain and lifestyle factors listed below.

Pain

- 0 = no pain
10 = worst possible pain
-

Mood level

- 0 = worst mood or most anxious/unhelpful thoughts
10 = best mood/happy helpful thoughts
-

Sleep level

- 0 = sleep completely disturbed
10 = no trouble sleeping
-

Physical activity

- 0 = unable to do physical activity
10 = activity not affected
-

Pain medicine effectiveness

- 0 = no pain relief at all
10 = good pain relief
-

Pain medicine frequency

- 0 = take no medicines
10 = take regular medicines every day
-

Day 1: Date _____

	Pain (0-10)	Mood level (0-10)	Sleep level (0-10)	Physical activity (0-10)	Pain medicine effectiveness (0-10)	Pain medicine frequency (0-10)
AM						
PM						
NIGHT						

Day 2: Date _____

	Pain (0-10)	Mood level (0-10)	Sleep level (0-10)	Physical activity (0-10)	Pain medicine effectiveness (0-10)	Pain medicine frequency (0-10)
AM						
PM						
NIGHT						

Day 3: Date _____

	Pain (0-10)	Mood level (0-10)	Sleep level (0-10)	Physical activity (0-10)	Pain medicine effectiveness (0-10)	Pain medicine frequency (0-10)
AM						
PM						
NIGHT						

Day 4: Date _____

	Pain (0-10)	Mood level (0-10)	Sleep level (0-10)	Physical activity (0-10)	Pain medicine effectiveness (0-10)	Pain medicine frequency (0-10)
AM						
PM						
NIGHT						

Day 5: Date _____

	Pain (0-10)	Mood level (0-10)	Sleep level (0-10)	Physical activity (0-10)	Pain medicine effectiveness (0-10)	Pain medicine frequency (0-10)
AM						
PM						
NIGHT						

Day 6: Date _____

	Pain (0-10)	Mood level (0-10)	Sleep level (0-10)	Physical activity (0-10)	Pain medicine effectiveness (0-10)	Pain medicine frequency (0-10)
AM						
PM						
NIGHT						

Day 7: Date _____

	Pain (0-10)	Mood level (0-10)	Sleep level (0-10)	Physical activity (0-10)	Pain medicine effectiveness (0-10)	Pain medicine frequency (0-10)
AM						
PM						
NIGHT						

Questions for my GP/health professional

In this section you can write down questions for your GP/health professional before your next visit.

My GP: Dr _____ Telephone: _____

My appointments

Date	Reason for visit/questions	Outcomes/answers
Visit 1		
Visit 2		
Visit 3		

Questions for my GP/health professional

My physiotherapist: _____ Telephone: _____

My appointments

Date	Reason for visit/questions	Outcomes/answers
Visit 1		
Visit 2		
Visit 3		

Questions for my GP/health professional

My pharmacy/pharmacist: _____

Telephone: _____

Date	Reason for visit/questions	Outcomes/answers
Visit 1		
Visit 2		
Visit 3		

Questions for my GP/health professional

Other health profession (e.g. occupational therapy):

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

My appointments

Date	Reason for visit/questions	Outcomes/answers
Visit 1		
Visit 2		
Visit 3		

About Arthritis NSW

Arthritis NSW is a not-for-profit organisation providing membership support through nearly fifty branches and support groups. We also offer a professional phone information service, education programs and information for people affected with arthritis including chronic or persistent pain.

Unit 1.15, 32 Delhi Road, North Ryde NSW 2113

Mail: Locked Bag 2216, North Ryde NSW 1670

Phone: 02 9857 3300

Fax: 02 9857 3399

Email: info@arthritisnsw.org.au

Web: www.arthritisnsw.org.au

Freecall: 1800 011 041

About National Prescribing Service Limited

National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) is an independent, non-profit organisation for quality use of medicines. We provide accurate, balanced, evidence-based information and services to help people choose if, when and how to use medicines to improve their health and wellbeing. We are member-based and work in partnership with health professionals, government, pharmaceutical industry and consumers. NPS is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

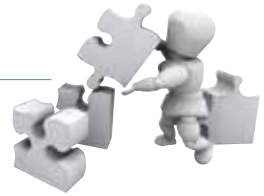
Level 7/418A Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

Phone: 02 8217 8700

Fax: 02 9211 7578

Email: info@nps.org.au

Web: www.nps.org.au



Where to find useful information

Arthritis NSW

Website:

www.arthritisnsw.org.au

Phone: 02 9857 3300

Freecall: 1800 011 041

National Prescribing Service Limited

Website:

www.nps.org.au

Phone: 02 8217 8700

Chronic Pain Australia

Website:

www.chronicpinaustralia.org.au

Phone: 02 9481 0189

Arthritis Australia

Website:

www.arthritisaustralia.com.au

Contact your local State or Territory Arthritis Office on the freecall number below for information, education and support for people with arthritis

Freecall anywhere
in Australia



1800 011 041

Acknowledgements

Arthritis NSW would like to thank members and branches for their valuable contribution to the content and consumer testing of this booklet. We would like to acknowledge the general public who attended the information sessions & focus groups and health professionals who contributed at different stages of the project. Sincere thanks to all members of the Project Advisory Committee, the staff at Arthritis NSW, the Arthritis NSW Education Committee and the National Prescribing Service Limited.

This booklet was produced by Arthritis NSW with the support of the National Prescribing Service Limited.

Arthritis NSW

Unit 1.15, 32 Delhi Road,
North Ryde NSW 2113
Mail: Locked Bag 2216,
North Ryde NSW 1670
Phone: 02 9857 3300
Fax: 02 9857 3399
Email: info@arthritisnsw.org.au
Web: www.arthritisnsw.org.au
Freecall: 1800 011 041

National Prescribing Service Limited

Level 7/418A Elizabeth Street,
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Phone: 02 8217 8700
Fax: 02 9211 7578
Email: info@nps.org.au
Web: www.nps.org.au



National Prescribing Service Limited