



Chronic pain is one of the most common ailments affecting American adults today, leading millions to seek medical care for their discomfort each year. According to the CDC, an estimated 50 million Americans suffer from some type of chronic pain condition. However, treating such pain has become the source of much debate, as the opioid crisis continues and patients seek safe and effective treatment alternatives.

Back Pain is Prevalent:

Among the most frequently reported types of pain is back pain. In all of its presentations and levels of severity, back pain will impact 80% of Americans at some point in their lives. The majority of these cases are ultimately resolved. However, an estimated 7% will go on to develop chronic back pain.

- Women suffer from back pain at a higher rate than men (30.2% compared to 26.4%)
- 54% of those reporting back pain work desk jobs
- 39% of back pain sufferers report that their pain interferes with their ability to perform daily tasks
- 37% of back pain sufferers report that their pain interferes with their ability to sleep
- Back pain is the leading cause of disability in employees under the age of 45

There are Many Forms of Chronic Pain:

While lower back pain is the most common, there are many other types of pain that may become chronic and impact a patient's quality of life. Among chronic pain sufferers, other commonly reported conditions include:

- Neck pain
- Headache and migraine pain
- Joint pain due to arthritis, bursitis, or tendinitis
- Nerve pain such as diabetic neuropathy, sciatica, carpal tunnel, or neuralgia of the facial trigeminal nerve

Pain Killers Have Become Problematic:

Each year, pharmacies fill millions of prescriptions for opioid pain killers. Most of these are short-term solutions. However, 3 to 4% of Americans are receiving these drugs as part of a long-term treatment plan. The potential problems surrounding routine opioid use are many:

- More than 46 Americans died every day in 2016 from opioid-related overdoses.
- Individuals between the ages of 25 - 54 are at the highest risk for opioid overdose.
- 3 out of 4 new heroin users have a history of past opioid abuse.

Alternative Pain Management Options Exist:

There are many potential treatment options for chronic pain, depending on factors such as location, severity, and medical history. These options can often effectively reduce pain safely and for extended periods of time. Options for back pain may include:

- ***Epidural Steroid Injections*** – Minimally invasive injections of corticosteroids and local anesthetic administered to the cervical, thoracic, lumbar, or sacral areas of the spine.
- ***Facet Injections*** – These injections also use corticosteroid and a local anesthetic injected specifically into painful joints associated with facet joint syndrome.
- ***Medial Branch Block*** – A strong local anesthetic is injected onto the medial branch nerves which supply the facet joints responsible for pain.
- ***Radiofrequency Ablation*** – A minimally invasive procedure through which targeted nerve fibers are damaged or destroyed with the use of heat, thereby reducing or eliminating their ability to transmit pain signals.