

# Ten Tips for Parents of Children & Teens with Chronic Pain

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1. **Take care of yourself.** Make self-care a top priority. When you are in a healthy state of mind, you will be better equipped to help your child manage their pain.
2. **Establish a family understanding that your child's chronic pain is real.** You can support your child by listening to them and affirming what they tell you about their pain.
3. **Help your child understand chronic pain and how to deal with it.** Check your child's understanding of their pain. Bring them to clinicians who can help explain the pain and connect your child to other resources.
4. **Help your child develop a "toolkit" of coping strategies.** Ask a clinician to speak with you and your child about different coping methods. Encourage your child to try them and find out which ones work best, and encourage them to use these skills regularly.
5. **Ask your child what type of support they would like from you.** Each child with chronic pain has a different experience. Support needs will change as your child grows. By asking your child what support is best for them, you are showing that you care about their unique needs.
6. **As much as possible, maintain normal age-appropriate expectations for your child.** As your child grows, encourage independence and a more involved role in their pain management.
7. **Focus on healthy behaviors.** Even on bad pain days, give attention and praise to your child when they engage in healthy behaviors (i.e., using their coping toolkit).
8. **Take a rehabilitation approach.** Keep up hope that the pain will resolve and in the meantime, set goals of increasing your child's engagement in normal daily living in spite of pain. Work with your child and your pain team to find an optimal level of paced activity that does not exacerbate the pain.
9. **Limit the amount of focus directed toward your child's pain.** Set aside a 10-minute "pain chat" everyday, or agree on a weekly check-in with your child.
10. **Build a support network for you and your child.** This can include extended family, friends, spiritual care providers, school counselors, support groups, and your child's pain team.

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# Resource List for Chronic Pain in Children & Teens

## Digital Resources

*Return to Functioning in Children and Teens with Chronic Pain: The Role of Parents* / <http://www.cirpd.org/resources/Webinars/Pages/ChronicPainResearchWebinars.aspx>

This interactive webinar, led by Dr. Erin Moon and Dr. Susan Bennett, provides guidelines for parents for helping their child or teen return to living a healthy life. These guidelines stem from research and the experiences of families living with chronic pain. Parents will learn the ways in which chronic pain can impact the day-to-day lives of children and teens, and guidelines to help their child or teen live a healthy life, despite chronic pain.

*People in Pain Network* / <http://www.pipain.com/>

People in Pain Network is a non-profit organization that promotes well-being for people living in persistent pain and those who care about them, by strengthening self-management programs, access to resources, and community support.

*Pain BC* / <http://www.painbc.ca/>

Pain BC works toward an inclusive society where all people living with pain are able to live, work, play, relate, and learn without their experience of pain being a barrier to pursuing their lives. Pain BC reduces the burden of pain through engagement, education, advocacy, and knowledge translation.

*Complex pain: What to do when pain won't go away* / Complex Pain Team, BCCH

In this program three youths tell their stories about mastering complex pain and returning to wellness. All have worked with a multidisciplinary health care team, using pharmaceutical, physiotherapy and psychological strategies, yet they differ on the aspects they found most helpful. These stories are validating and inspirational for youth with complex pain, their families, teachers and care providers.

## Books

This is a list of selected books available from the Family Support & Resource Centre (FRSC).

*Conquering your child's chronic pain: A pediatrician's guide for reclaiming a normal childhood* / Zeltzer, Lonnie K.; Schlank, Christina Blackett

This is a guide to control the pain that plagues a child from headaches to arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, fibromyalgia, and more. Explains how to soothe the nervous system, reactivate the body's natural pain control mechanisms, determine which medications are most effective, implement relaxation techniques and reduce parents' guilt.

*Explain pain* / Butler, David S.; Moseley, G. Lorimer

This book discusses how pain responses are produced by the brain: how responses to injury from the autonomic motor and immune systems in your body contribute to pain, and why pain can persist after tissues have had plenty of time to heal. It aims to give clinicians and people in pain tools to learn about the processes involved during pain.

Anyone in BC is welcome to borrow from the library. We mail books for free across BC including return postage. Don't see what you're looking for? Email us to make a purchasing suggestion. If you are staying at the hospital but are unable to come to the centre, we will be happy to deliver resources during our working hours.

The Family Support & Resource Centre  
4480 Oak Street, BC Children's Hospital Room K2-126  
Open Monday - Friday, 10am - 4pm  
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