

WORKING WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

A healthcare provider (HCP) can be a doctor, nurse, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, physical therapist, or other professional trained to care for your health.

PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT ✓

The following steps will help your HCP to help you:

- Keep a pain journal.
 - When is your pain at its worst?
 - What makes your pain worse?
 - What makes your pain better?
- Bring a list of pain medications you have *tried*. Make sure to include any over-the-counter substances and medicines prescribed by other doctors.
- Make a list of medicines you are taking now—even the ones you are *not* taking for pain.

List all over-the-counter medicines, supplements, and vitamins.
- Ask whether your HCP needs you to bring your medical records, x-rays, CT scans, and/or MRI films that you have.
- Think about how your pain affects your life. Does it stop you from doing regular activities? Are there things you would like to do, but you can't because of your pain?
Be ready to talk about these things with your HCP.
- Write down any questions you may have for the HCP, and bring them to your visits.

AT YOUR VISIT

- Your HCP will examine you and ask you questions about:
 - Other conditions you have (such as diabetes, high blood pressure, thyroid problems)
 - Your pain
 - When your pain started
 - Where your pain is now
 - How bad your pain is
 - What activities make your pain better or worse
 - If you feel weakness when you are in pain
 - What type of pain you are having (aching, burning, stabbing, etc.)
 - How you are sleeping
 - Your emotions
 - Stomach or bowel problems
 - Recent infections

Adapted from: American Chronic Pain Association. *Working With Your Doctor. What can I expect from a visit with a Pain Management Doctor?* <http://www.theacpa.org/faqlisting.aspx>.

- Your HCP may order tests, such as x-rays, MRIs, or blood tests.
- Your HCP will work with you to make a treatment plan *that is right for you*. You may need more than one type of treatment to get better (such as medicine, PT, and counseling).
- You can help your HCP make *the best plan for you* by talking about your pain and how you feel about different treatments.
- Making chronic pain better requires active effort from you and from your HCPs.

At every visit, speak with your HCPs about your pain and whether your plan is working for you.