

## ACUTE TO CHRONIC PAIN

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

### KNOW THE FACTS



Pain, according to the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP), is "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience linked to, or similar to that linked to, actual or potential tissue damage."

Acute pain, as defined by the IASP, "appears suddenly, is initially sharp or intense, and acts as a warning of potential harm or illness." It can be caused by injury, surgery, trauma, burns, or procedures. Acute pain typically lasts from a few minutes to less than six months and usually resolves once the underlying cause is addressed or healed.



Chronic pain, as defined by the IASP, is pain that lasts for more than three months. It often becomes the primary health issue for individuals, requiring specific diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. Research shows that chronic pain can evolve into a disease, causing measurable changes in the brain, spinal cord, and peripheral nervous system.

# ACUTE TO CHRONIC PAIN

Acute-to-chronic pain refers to the transition of acute pain to chronic pain.

In many cases, when acute pain persists longer than three months, it turns chronic, which can last for years or a lifetime.

## MANAGING ACUTE PAIN VS. CHRONIC PAIN

### ACUTE PAIN

Acute pain treatment focuses on addressing both the pain and its cause, such as an injury or illness, often requiring temporary changes in routine. Management may include:

- Rest.
- Heat or ice application.
- Compression and elevation.
- Over-the-counter medications.
- Low-dose opioids for short periods.
- Physical activity or movement therapies.
- Behavioral health techniques.
- Alternative therapies like massage or acupuncture.

### CHRONIC PAIN

An individualized, multimodal approach involving coordination among various healthcare professionals is the best practice for managing chronic pain. Management may include:

- Mindfulness or meditation.
- Rehabilitation for daily activities.
- Physical and occupational therapy.
- Yoga or tai chi.
- Behavioral health strategies.
- Medications (OTCs, NSAIDs, non-opioids, opioids).
- Medical cannabis.
- Medical devices.
- Interventional procedures.