Communicating with your health care provider can help you get on the most appropriate treatment plan. Explaining your chronic pain to your family members, friends and others in your life can help them understand what you are experiencing and how they can help you.

**How to talk about chronic pain with your health care provider**

If you experience pain every day, speak with your health care provider about a pain management plan that would be most appropriate for you. Only you know how much your chronic pain is affecting your quality of life.

**Explain your symptoms**

- How does it feel? Some descriptions of how pain feels includes burning, dull aching, pins and needles, sharp or shooting, stabbing, throbbing or tightness.
- How much does it hurt? You can use a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is no pain, and 10 is the most painful thing you’ve ever experienced.
- Where is it? Is it in one area or does it travel to different areas?
- How long does it last? Does it come and go or is it always there?
- When does it hurt? In the morning, at night or some other time?
- What makes it better or worse? Physical activity, resting or other things you have tried to manage the pain at home? Are there any things you have found you can do or that you avoid doing to reduce your pain?

**Explain how your pain affects your quality of life**

Speaking with your health care provider about how your pain affects your daily activities, work responsibilities and quality of life can help them better understand what may be the best treatment plan for you. You should also share any effect it has on you emotionally or mentally, including anxiety, depression or other mood changes.

Some things you may want to explain include pain or difficulty when:

- Getting out of bed
- Getting ready, such as putting on your clothes or shoes without help
- Carrying out your responsibilities at work or having to miss work
- Doing daily tasks at home
- Not being able to do activities you used to do
How to talk about chronic pain with others

It may be frustrating when family members, friends and others in your life do not understand what you are going through. As with your health care provider, there are ways to effectively communicate with other people about your chronic conditions:

- **Be patient and understanding.** It may be just as difficult for others to understand how your psoriatic arthritis and chronic pain affect your daily life, as it is for you to explain it to them.

- **Educate others about your conditions.** Other people may not understand what you are going through because they do not understand your chronic conditions. Explain what psoriatic arthritis and chronic pain are. You may also want to share educational resources from your health care provider or the National Psoriasis Foundation.

- **Describe your day-to-day life.** Explain the types of symptoms you experience and how your conditions impact your quality of life. This will help others to understand the difficulties you experience. Also, share your symptoms of chronic pain, how it feels and how it affects your emotional and mental health.

- **Explain the unpredictable.** You may also want to discuss how your symptoms may change from day to day. Some days may be “good” days, while others may be more difficult. This may be helpful for others to understand when you are unable to attend events or cancel plans that were made in advance.

- **Know when to ask for help.** Be honest with yourself and with others about how your chronic pain may be affecting your daily and physical activities. This may mean describing how difficult household chores or work responsibilities are for you to do. Letting other people know will give them the opportunity to help you with these activities or find ways to make adjustments.

- **Show thanks.** Let your family members, friends and everyone in your life know that you appreciate their support, whether it’s helping with tasks, listening, learning about your conditions or just acknowledging that your pain is real.

It may not always be easy for others in your life to understand what you are experiencing. But you can do your part to help them see what you are going through and how they can support you.

What should I do next?

Contact our Patient Navigation Center to find providers, prepare for appointments, discuss treatments and get help with accessing treatments (find contact information below).