

Better LIVING

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Tired of living with pain? When Surgery is Not The Best Option

Chronic or daily pain often becomes its own personal burden. Limited motion and decreased activity can lead to depression and overall malaise - a huge detriment in treating and eliminating pain. Not to mention the likelihood of a worsening condition.

Most patients consider surgery as a drastic measure; their final alternative to decreasing the pain at its source. But what if surgery is not the answer?

In many cases, physicians look to prolong surgery for a number of reasons. Age, for example: If a patient is young, s/he may not be a good candidate for a joint replacement, since many replacement parts have a short life span of their own and will need to be replaced.

Overall physical condition is another reason a doctor may not recommend surgery. Diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and obesity may all increase the risk of less than perfect outcomes and can actually outweigh the benefits.

As pain specialists, we must treat each individual case with a customized program developed as a result of the patient's lifestyle, overall physical condition, level of pain, and radiological test results (MRIs, CT Scans, Xrays, etc.).

Some alternatives to surgical procedures would be as follows:

• Epidural Steroid injections

This outpatient procedure is an injection of steroid-anesthetic medication. It helps to reduce swelling and inflammation of the irritated spinal nerves. It takes just a few minutes to perform, but many patients feel significant relief after one



injection. Others may need multiple injections before they benefit from the medication.

• **Facet joint injections.** The facet joints which are found along both sides of the back of the spine may be irritated or inflamed. Under a fluoroscope, or special x-ray device, a Pain Specialist can pinpoint the exact location of the inflammation and inject a soothing mixture of numbing anesthetic and anti-inflammatory medications. Relief is usually immediate and may last from several days to several months.

• **PRP Therapy** - Platelet Rich Plasma injections are a newer form of therapy and is a regenerative treatment for soft tissue, muscle, ligament or tendon injury. Blood components are taken from a person's own body and used to treat the damaged or injured tissue. The blood platelets and white blood cells work together to promote healing in a more natural way. The growth factors released by platelets help stimulate healing and tissue growth. PRP allows us to treat tissue damage in a less invasive method and often results in a less painful recovery.

• **P-Stim** - Pulse Stimulation Treatment has shown success in alleviating chronic lower back pain. This process of electrical stimulation provides a continuous flow of intermittent, low frequency electrical pulses to specific peripheral nerves with end locations in the ear.

JR
Spotlight:



Linnette Garcia

Behind the scenes of every successful organization lies a strong support team. Linnette is an important member of that team here at Jersey Rehab.

As the Assistant Bookkeeper and Payroll Clerk, Linnette is responsible for making sure the flow of Payables and Receivables is consistent and up to date, handling payroll, purchasing, and in general, a Jack of All Trades.

Linnette's infectious laugh and contagious enthusiasm make her a fast favorite among her co-workers.

In her off hours, Linnette enjoys dancing, photography, painting, and family time.

Of course, there are additional avenues of treatment which are of a multi-disciplinary nature: Physical Therapy, Chiropractic Treatments, Acupuncture and Medical Massage all help to relieve pain when performed in conjunction with Pain Management on a regular basis.

15 for '15

Some healthful Tips: Make 2015 your year for Healthy Living

1. 30 times 3! Ideally, 30 minutes of exercise, at least 3 times a week is the goal. Start out with 5-10 minutes and work yourself up. You don't have to run a mile, but you can do some stretches and simple exercises to help ease painful muscles and joints. Try some Side Bends - bend from the waist from one side to the other. Or some Arm Circles - extend your arms out at both sides and rotate them forward and then backward for 30 seconds. Small movements, including even daily chores keep joints moving. You'll be amazed at much better you'll feel.

2. Reduce your Stress. Sometimes this is easier said than done, but you can start with a few simple techniques:

- Breathe! Breathe slowly and deeply. Count to 5 as you inhale and count to 5 as you exhale.
- Music also helps - take a moment to listen to some soothing, calming music.
- Laughter - call someone who makes you laugh. Think of a funny joke you've heard. There's a reason "they" call laughter the best medicine. Anxiety and stress are often major contributors to enhanced pain. Why not make 2015 the year of "Less Stress"?

3. Take Your Vitamins. A daily multiple vitamin will ensure you are giving your body the daily dose of essential vitamins it needs. See your doctor to find out what other supplements may help you feel better - sometimes an extra dose of Magnesium, Bs or D vitamins can make the difference between feeling good and feeling great.

4. Hydrate. Drinking water helps with weight-control, smoking cessation, skin care, muscle cramps, energy - the list goes on and on! Fill up a large 2.2 liter bottle every morning and try to get to the bottom of it by the end of the day. You'll love the extra energy and less weight that you'll feel.

5. Sleep. You should be getting between 8-9 hours of sleep per night. Studies show a link between loss of sleep and a lower pain threshold. Additionally, sleep affects your mood and your overall health.

6. Avoid tobacco. We can't say it enough...tobacco causes and contributes to cancer. It is also responsible for an estimated 20%-30% of heart disease (in the U.S.), along with increasing risks for hypertension obesity, bronchitis, and emphysema. On average, it takes a smoker about six attempts before s/he is successful at quitting smoking. Don't be afraid to get help, either from your doctor or by using over-the-counter cessation aids. Quit NOW!

7. Avoid excessive alcohol consumption. Alcohol aggravates other physical ailments that you may be suffering from. It can impair your judgement and cause you to make bad and unsafe decisions, as well. Moderation is the key

8. Protect your skin. Dry, itchy skin can harbor harmful infections and affect your overall health. Moisturize everyday, all day - men and women. Use lotions and creams with a minimum SPF 15 and be sure to pay special attention to hands and feet, especially if you suffer with diabetes.

9. Get a Balance Test. Sometimes bad or decreased balance can mean nerve damage or muscle weakness. Get tested and make sure your poor balance is not indicative of a bigger problem. You'll also be able to learn simple exercises to help improve your balance and reduce your risk for falls.

10. Check yourself. Check your body periodically for injuries, lumps, bumps and bruises. Sometimes patients with nerve damage experience little or no feeling in their hands and/or feet and can injure themselves without even knowing it! Left untreated, this condition will only get worse. Give yourself a once-over regularly if you suffer from a nerve pain and make sure to visit your doctor.

11. See your doctor. We all say we're going to, but make this the year you

Call today for an appointment or ask your doctor for a referral:

In Belleville: 973-844-9220

In West Orange: 973-399-PAIN

In Rumson: 732-345- 8535

In Bronx: 718-792-6503

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really DO it. Get that physical, that colonoscopy, that mammography/prostate exam. Early detection is key in most illnesses and if you're healthy, wouldn't it be nice to stop worrying about little aches and pains? Call your doctor and make an appointment for a physical today.

12. Change your shoes. That's right - your shoes! Foam-soled sandals and flip flops are among the biggest offenders, offering little or no arch support and causing pain in backs, feet, and ankles. If you know you'll be walking or on your feet for a while, wear sneakers. Orthotics will help, no matter what shoe you wear. If you are good to your feet, your feet are good to your whole body.

13. Treat Your Pain. Find out what's causing those aches and pains and reduce/ eliminate them, either with lifestyle modifications or professional pain management. Make 2015 your year to start living a more rewarding, pain-free life.

14. Eat At Least One Healthy Meal A Day. Swap out those fast food cheeseburgers for a healthy salad or a turkey sandwich. Subtle changes in your daily diet can change your mood, curb hunger and help you shed a few pounds.

15. Smile More. As silly as it may sound, studies show that an optimistic outlook helps you live healthier and longer!

Visit our new and improved website!
Learn about symptoms, treatment options - you can even request an appointment or sign up for IQHealth.

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