

## Chronic pain:useful terms

### Personal Injury

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**Analgesic** - (also known as a painkiller) is any member of the group of drugs used to relieve pain.

**Epidural** - Epidurals are given for the relief of pain. A cocktail of drugs containing a corticosteroid and a local anaesthetic is injected into the epidural space, between the bone and the membrane that encloses the spinal cord.

**Fusion** - Surgical procedure designed to abolish movement across a joint. Usually involves bone grafting and sometimes metal fixation.

**Gout** - Gout is a type of arthritis that causes sudden and extremely painful inflammatory attacks in the joints – most commonly the big toe, ankles and knees but any other joint too.

**Guanethidine Blocks** – Tourniquet is applied to the limb and guanethidine is injected into a vein to temporarily treat Complex Regional Pain Syndrome symptoms.

**Hydrotherapy** - formerly called hydrotherapy involves the use of water for pain-relief and treating illness.

**Hyperalgesia** - The perception of a painful stimulus as more painful than normal.

**Instability** - A term used to describe an abnormal increase in the movement of one vertebrae to another.

**Local Anaesthetic Blocks** – Local anaesthetic is injected around the sympathetic nerves from a temporary sympathetic block to treat Complex Regional Pain Syndrome.

**MRI Scan** - Magnetic Resonance Imaging involves a highly technical scanner that uses magnetic fields and computer technology to generate images of the internal anatomy of the body, including discs and nerve roots. It is a painless procedure, although like CT scans, people with claustrophobia may find it difficult.

**Myelography** - A water-soluble, radio-opaque dye is injected into the cerebro-spinal fluid. This allows nerve tissue to be viewed on x-ray and enables a doctor to trace any nerve entrapment.

**Neuralgia** - Pain in the distribution of a nerve or nerves.

**Neuropathic pain** - Neuropathic pain is pain initiated or caused by a primary lesion or dysfunction in the peripheral or central nervous system. For example pain following shingles, or an amputation, or spinal cord trauma.

**Nociceptor** - A receptor preferentially sensitive to a noxious stimulus or to stimuli that would become noxious if prolonged.

**Occupational Therapy** - Occupational therapy is the assessment and treatment of physical and psychiatric conditions using specific, purposeful activity to prevent disability and promote independent function in all aspects of daily life.

**Pain** - Pain is an emotion experienced in the brain, it is not like touch, taste, sight, smell or hearing. It is categorised into Acute pain - less than twelve weeks duration and Chronic pain - of more than twelve weeks. Pain can be perceived as a warning of potential damage, but can also be present when no actual harm is being done to the body.

**Pain Management** - is a branch of medicine employing an interdisciplinary approach for easing the suffering and improving the quality of life of those living with pain.

**Parathesia** - An abnormal sensation (such as burning, prickling formication), whether spontaneous or evoked.

**Physiotherapy** – One of the ways in which Chronic Pain is treated. It is a healthcare profession which sees human movement as central to the health and wellbeing of individuals. Physiotherapists provide services to individuals to develop, maintain and restore maximum movement and functional ability.

**Psychiatry** - medical specialty devoted to the study and treatment of mental disorders—which include various affective, behavioural, cognitive and perceptual disorders.

**Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD)** – Another term used for Complex Regional Pain Syndrome.

**Spinal Cord** - Long, thin, tubular bundle of nervous tissue and support cells that extends from the brain (the medulla oblongata specifically). The brain and spinal cord together make up the central nervous system.

**Spondylitis** - Inflammation of any of the spinal vertebrae. This can be because of injury, infection or rheumatoid disease.

**Sympathetic Nervous System** - is one of the three parts of the autonomic nervous system, along with the enteric and parasympathetic systems. It is a group of special nerve fibres which is thought to be involved in the development of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome.

**Syndrome** - Term used to denote a collection of symptoms, e.g. chronic back syndrome.

**Thoracic** - The region of the spine between the neck and the lumbar vertebrae. The ribs connect with the 12 thoracic vertebrae.

**Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)** - A battery powered machine that delivers small electric shocks via adhesively attached electrodes, placed either side of the spine with the aim of blocking the pain messages to the brain and producing the body's natural pain killers, endorphins.

**X-Rays** – X-radiation is a form of electro-magnetic radiation which is used to see inside the human body. X-rays are often taken to look to see where an individual has thinning of the bone which can lead to Complex Regional Pain Syndrome.