

## Children's Physiotherapy Service

**0300 330 5777**

**bromh.cccpod5@nhs.net**

### Tell us what you think

We want you to be happy with the service you receive from us, but we know that every so often something might go wrong. If you're unhappy with the care you receive or an element of our service, we want to hear from you.

Of course, we also want to hear from you if you're happy with the care you're receiving - it's good to be able to thank the team and let people know they're doing a good job, so if you have a compliment or congratulation, we'd like to hear from you.

If we are unable to resolve your concerns or you would like to take the matter further please contact us at the address below.

Central Court  
1 Knoll Rise  
Orpington  
BR6 OJA

[bromh.feedback@nhs.net](mailto:bromh.feedback@nhs.net)

[bromleyhealthcare.org.uk](http://bromleyhealthcare.org.uk)



# Improving Pain

Children's Physiotherapy

Provided by Bromley Healthcare

# What is Pain?

Pain acts like an alarm, a warning sign and it occurs when our brain is telling us we are harming ourselves or could/about to harm ourselves. That way we can do something to stop it and protect ourselves. e.g. when you touch something hot, the pain makes you move your hand to stop you burning yourself, or limping if an area is painful etc.

## Pain is a message created by your brain telling you to protect yourself

There are two types of pain:

**Acute pain:** begins suddenly, helping to protect you and doesn't last for too long. During this normal functioning nerves send messages from injured or inflamed tissue to the brain to be assessed. For a short period these nerve are more sensitive to allow the area to settle. This sensitivity reduces as an injury heals.

**Persistent pain:** sometimes called chronic or long term pain, is pain that lasts longer than three to six months after normal healing times.

When we experience pain it can affect lots of different body systems such as immune, hormonal, emotional etc. For example we may feel sick or sweaty at the same time.

Although pain is complicated, it is not able to tell us how much or little damage has occurred or where it is coming from. Think of a paper cut, these can be really painful but have very little tissue damage.

## The level of pain doesn't equal the level of harm

Pain can also occur without damage; or damage can occur without pain, e.g. have you ever got a bruise and not known how you got it?

- Headaches
- Post-exercise
- Phantom limb pain
- Temperature e.g. a hot shower

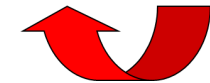
# Persistent pain

Sometimes pain sticks around longer than it needs to but it doesn't mean an injury hasn't healed properly. The usual medical treatment doesn't always work as easily for this persistent pain, and in some cases doctors cannot find any damage in the painful area making it hard to understand why it hurts.

When this happens, it's like the brain and the nerves are confused, sending pain messages to protect you when they don't need to! Think of it as the volume control settings for your pain system are high, e.g. the nervous system has remained more sensitive.

## All pain is real and produced by the brain

As we can see, pain isn't very simple to understand or manage. However, by thinking of the things that can turn up the volume of pain we can find ways to improve pain and make it easier to manage.



By doing things that turn down the volume you are calming down the pain system	By doing things to turn up the volume you are increasing the sensitivity of the pain system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pacing—'little and often'</li><li>• Relaxation and calm</li><li>• Doing things that make you happy/distraction</li><li>• Exercise and movement</li><li>• Some pain killers/medications</li><li>• Challenging thoughts and emotions</li><li>• Sleep and lifestyle</li><li>• Understanding pain</li><li>• Self massage/heat/cold</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stress and tension</li><li>• Long periods of rest</li><li>• Anger</li><li>• Sadness</li><li>• Some pain killers/medications</li><li>• Doing too much then doing too little</li><li>• Worry</li><li>• Focusing on pain</li><li>• Avoiding certain movements or activities</li></ul>