



# spotlight on health

## Dealing With Pain And Depression

(NAPSA)—There may be hope and help for many people who are sad and suffering.

If you or someone you care about is in pain, you should know that:

- With proper pain management, your overall health, well-being and quality of life will improve. Your mind and body will be less stressed. You'll probably be able to sleep better and enjoy better relationships with friends and family. You may also be able to resume your normal activities, including going to work and taking part in social activities.

- Researchers at the Mayo Clinic have found pain and depression are closely related. Sometimes, depression causes unexplained physical symptoms—such as back pain or headaches. In other cases, depression increases the suffering associated with pain. Conversely, chronic pain is stressful and depressing in itself. Sometimes pain and depression create a vicious cycle.

- Some research shows that pain and depression share common pathways in the brain. In fact, the same chemical messengers control pain and mood. In addition, both chronic pain and depression are influenced by genetic and environmental factors.

- That means, in some cases, antidepressants can reduce the perception of pain—as well as improve sleep and overall quality of life. Other types of mental health therapy can be helpful as well. Often, treatment involves both medical and mental health providers.

- Unfortunately, both pain and depression carry a needless stigma. Many people who suffer are fearful or embarrassed to let their families, friends and even their health care professionals know



**Doctors say that easing pain can decrease depression.**

they are in pain—they don't want to appear weak or be considered bad patients.

- According to the National Center for Health Statistics, more than one-quarter of American adults—an estimated 76.5 million people—report a problem with pain that lasted more than 24 hours. About a third of people in pain consider it “disabling”; that is, both severe and greatly affecting daily life.

- It's smart to learn all you can about pain and possible treatments and insist on the care you need and deserve.

That's the word from an independent nonprofit organization, the American Pain Foundation. It works to improve the quality of life of people with pain by raising public awareness, providing practical information, promoting research and advocating to remove barriers and to increase access to effective pain management.

### **Learn More**

You can learn more about controlling pain and depression online at [www.painfoundation.org](http://www.painfoundation.org) or by calling (888) 615-PAIN (7246).