

# IOWA PAIN MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Your contact name  
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## **You Don't Have to Live in Pain** *September is National Pain Awareness Month*

September 1, 2006 (Your city, Iowa) -- Persistent pain is significantly under-treated and incredibly misunderstood — by many health care professionals, most of the decision makers in Washington, DC, and even by those closest to you — your family members and friends. In 2000, Congress declared 2000-2010 the Decade of Pain Control and Research to make pain a national health priority. Through this declaration, leading pain organizations who pushed for this declaration, including the American Academy of Pain Medicine, the American Headache Society, and the American Pain Society, hoped that public attention and funding for research would be focused on this serious public health issue that affects 75 million Americans.

Name of your organization is part of the Iowa Pain Management Initiative. Our purpose is to educate all Iowans about pain management and to encourage all those in pain to talk to their doctors about it.

### Alternatives to Pain Medications

Many people who experience pain over a prolonged period of time become concerned about taking pain medications on an ongoing basis. While there are very effective medications available for many types of pain, there are also other treatments available that can be used instead of or in combination with drug therapies. Many of these treatments are considered to be “complementary” in that they work with other medical care and treatment.

Determine which of these therapies are available locally and use those for the article

## Cognitive Behavioral Techniques

Cognitive behavioral techniques are used to reduce the physical response to stress, thus helping to relieve pain.

- Biofeedback—using electrodes that measure temperature, heart beat, and sweating to monitor stress reactions and to enable the individual to consciously change physical stress responses.
- Deep breathing—focusing attention on breathing deeply and rhythmically.
- Guided imagery—focusing on a positive and relaxing image, such as walking through the countryside.
- Hypnosis—altering consciousness so that the individual is more open than usual to suggestions that can be used to change perceptions and behaviors.
- Meditation—emptying the mind of thought and focusing on breathing, a sound, or an object.
- Progressive muscle relaxation—progressively tensing and then relaxing the muscles in the body.

## Physical Techniques

Physical techniques range from procedural treatments (like acupuncture or TENS units) to focused movements.

- Acupuncture—using very thin needles to stimulate specific “energy lines” in the body, possibly achieving its results by increasing the pain killing chemicals produced by the body.
- Bioelectric therapy—delivering high frequency alternating electrical currents to the skin to interrupt pain signals before they reach the brain and to prompt the body to produce natural pain inhibitors.
- Chiropractic—adjusting a musculoskeletal area of the body which is functioning improperly.

- Hatha yoga—focusing on physical poses and controlled breathing to reduce stress and enhance peacefulness in body and mind.
- Healing Touch—reorienting energy in the body to allow and support healing.
- Heat or cold therapy—applying heat or cold directly to an area to either increase or constrict blood flow, depending on the type of pain being addressed.
- Massage—manipulating muscles, tendons, and ligaments by applying pressure to the body.
- Nerve blocks—injecting a local anesthetic to block pain impulses in the nerves.
- Physical therapy—using passive or active movements such as stretching, strengthening exercises, pain relief exercises, and low-impact aerobic conditioning.
- Reflexology—using pressure points on the feet and hands to alter energy that may influence pain.
- Tai chi—moving in a series of slow, relaxed, continuous movements while focusing on breathing and meditation
- TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation)—delivering a gentle electrical current through the skin to stimulate nerves in the affected area and send signals to the brain that alter pain perception.

***Provide comments from local practitioners of any of these therapies***

### Considerations

The American Pain Foundation suggests the following six actions to take when considering a treatment as an adjunct to a pain medication.

1. Consult with your healthcare provider—ask about the therapy you wish to try and determine with your provider how this therapy fits into your overall pain management plan.
2. Assess the safety and effectiveness of the therapy—ask whether the therapy is safe (does no harm) and effective (has a measurable benefit).
3. Check out the practitioner’s expertise, background, qualifications, and competence—ask whether the practitioner is licensed/certified to provide the therapy; ask others who have experienced the therapy how they were treated by the practitioner.
4. Talk to the practitioner—ask about her training, additional health care experience or training, licensure/certification, and whatever specific information you wish to know about the therapy.
5. Consider the quality of service delivery—ask how and where the therapy is given, visit the practice setting, ask how many patients the practitioner sees and how much time he spends with patients.
6. Think about the costs—ask which treatments will be covered by insurance and contact other practitioners of the therapy to see what they charge for comparable treatments.

#### Additional Information

There are many resources available that will provide more detailed information about the pain management approaches introduced here. Some of the most helpful include the following:

[Add local resources here](#)

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine

[www.nccam.nih.gov](http://www.nccam.nih.gov)

The National Pain Foundation

[www.nationalpainfoundation.org](http://www.nationalpainfoundation.org)

The Mayo Clinic

[www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

Duke University's Center for Integrative Medicine

[www.umassmed.edu/cfm/](http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/)

The American Chronic Pain Association

[www.theacpa.org](http://www.theacpa.org)

University of Maryland School of Medicine Center for Integrative Medicine

[www.campain.umm.edu](http://www.campain.umm.edu)

The American Academy of Pain Management

[www.aapainmanage.org](http://www.aapainmanage.org)

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