



Musculoskeletal Disorders: What You Need to Know

Musculoskeletal disorders range from conditions that arise suddenly and are short-lived, such as fractures, sprains and strains, to lifelong conditions associated with ongoing physical limitations and disability. They are typically characterized by pain (often persistent) and limitations in mobility, dexterity, and overall level of functioning, reducing people’s ability to work or quality of life.

Musculoskeletal disorders can affect joints, bones, muscles, the spine, and multiple areas of the body simultaneously.

Causes of Musculoskeletal Pain		Common Symptoms of Musculoskeletal Pain	
▪ Bone fractures ▪ Joint dislocation ▪ Direct blows to muscles, bones, or joints ▪ Overuse injuries	▪ Poor posture ▪ Sprains ▪ Lack of exercise and movement	▪ Aching and stiffness ▪ Burning sensations in the muscles ▪ Fatigue and feeling sluggish	▪ Muscle twitches ▪ Pain that worsens with movement ▪ Sleep disturbances

How Is Musculoskeletal Pain Treated?

Usually, musculoskeletal pain improves with proper treatment. Your treatment plan will depend on the underlying cause of your pain. If pain interferes with your daily activities or how well you can function, speak with a healthcare provider. Seek immediate medical help if you have severe pain from a sudden injury.

Common treatments include acupuncture, chiropractic adjustment, occupational therapy, pain relievers, physical therapy, splints, steroid injections, therapeutic massage, pain management, and surgery.

The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases offers free resources about bone, joint, muscle, and skin health. Visit www.niams.nih.gov/community-outreach-initiative for more information.