



# Taranaki DHB Persistent Pain Service

*TRIPLE ASSESSMENT*

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Fill in the questionnaire in as much detail as possible.

Bring your medicines, or a list of them.

If you have questions, write them down, it will help you to remember them.

Bring your reading glasses if you need them.

As with any long term problem, what you do for yourself is often the most important aspect in pain management.

## ■ ■ CONTACT US

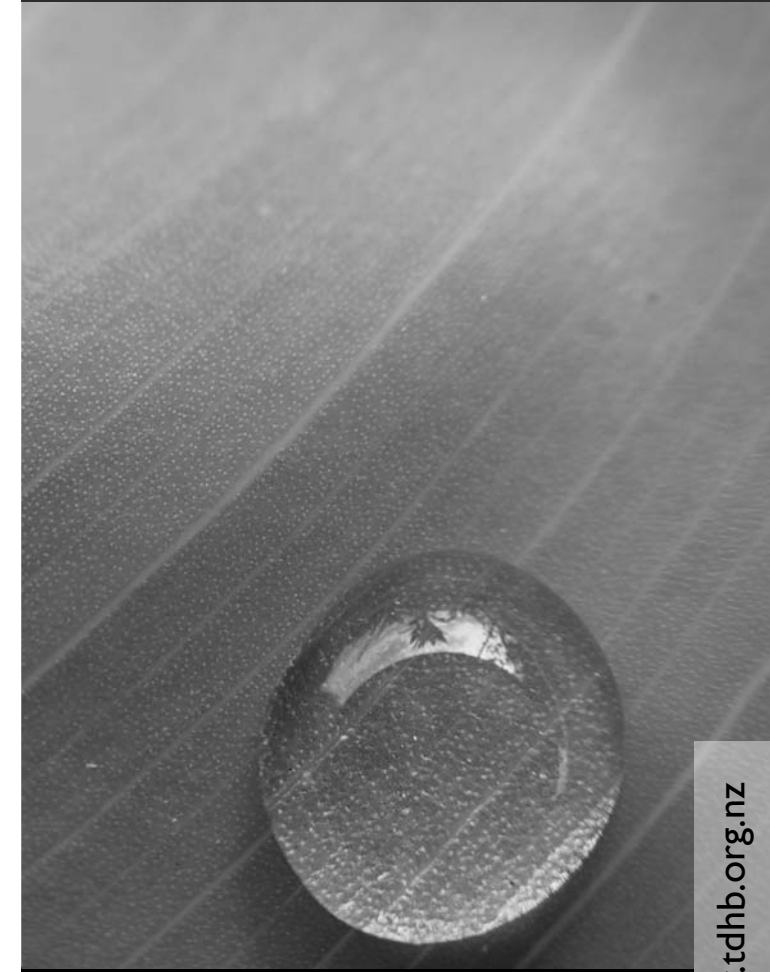
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*Persistent Pain Service*

[www.tdhb.org.nz](http://www.tdhb.org.nz)





## ■ ■ INTRODUCTION

Difficult, persisting (chronic) pain problems need the skills of more than a single professional. A team approach is often used in Taranaki.

## ■ ■ WHAT IS PERSISTENT PAIN?

We often think we know what other people's pain is like, yet pain can have very different meanings to different individuals.

Persistent pain is not simply the same as the acute pain we have all experienced after an injury.

It is a problem which goes on for a long time and can affect the whole of a person's life, including sleep, work, relationships, recreation and family activities.

## ■ ■ THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM

Because persistent pain is complex, you may need to meet a team of professionals with different backgrounds. These are people who are used to dealing with persistent pain problems.

In Taranaki, the core team usually includes an anaesthetist/pain specialist, a psychologist and a physiotherapist. At times there will be trainees present.

## ■ ■ A TYPICAL PAIN CLINIC VISIT

You will have three separate appointments. Each will take 45-90 minutes.

### *Anaesthetist*

Usually you meet with the anaesthetist/pain specialist first. You will be sent a questionnaire to fill out prior to this appointment. This is your chance to remember all the dates, the problems and the treatments you have tried.

The more information you can fill in the better. The questionnaire is discussed with you in detail.

Your list of medications and doses can be really important if you take more than one or two.

### *Physiotherapist*

The physiotherapist will also meet with you, and may ask you to complete specific activities.

### *Psychologist*

An interview with a psychologist is included as we recognise that having persistent pain can significantly affect several areas of your life. This can have an effect on how you feel and cope. The psychologist may ask you to complete some questionnaires when you attend.

If you would like to bring a family member to this, or indeed any of the appointments, we would like to meet them.

We will discuss your story and may examine you. Both the part that hurts and also your general health are assessed, as persistent pain and general health are often intertwined.

The aim of the assessment is to ensure that you have your pain addressed, and provide you with some options for the management of your pain. We may include an explanation for the pain, ways that you can help yourself, plus any other treatments that may be useful.

At a later date the team members will discuss the information gathered and the options available to you. These options will be discussed with you as soon as possible; they may have already been mentioned in your first visits; and in some cases, part of this plan is started at the first assessment, for example, we may start or change some medications.

Persistent pain can often only be helped by small changes in many areas. Some of these may involve lifestyle changes for you, so you will often be given reading materials about this in the clinic.

### *Follow-up visits*

It is common to be seen again. These visits are shorter duration, often 15-30 minutes.