

Integrative Pain Medicine: A Holistic Approach to Care

By Vince Robleto

What is chronic pain? Chronic pain in children and young people can be difficult to diagnose. Many times, parents and doctors attribute symptoms to “growing pains” or they think the pain is not real. But not only is pediatric chronic pain “real,” it can be excruciating and limit, or even stop, a child’s normal activities.

What are the causes of chronic pain? Chronic pain has a number of diagnoses and causes: Reflex Neurovascular Dystrophy (RND); Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD); Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS); Amplified Musculoskeletal Pain Syndrome (AMPS); Pediatric Fibromyalgia; Concussions; Chronic Headaches/Migraines; Pediatric Arthritis/Joint Pain and Functional Abdominal Pain.

What is integrative medicine? Integrative medicine brings together conventional and complementary approaches to care in a coordinated way. This approach puts the patient at the center of care, addressing the full range of physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual and environmental influences that affect a person’s health.

The Children’s Institute of Pittsburgh’s Pain & Integrative Medicine Program, the first of its kind, serves kids of all ages with chronic pain, including those families who are exploring treatments outside the typical medical model of care.



How can integrative medicine help treat chronic pain? At the Children’s Institute, the first step is a comprehensive evaluation by a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation physician. From there, care plans are individualized, family-centered and focus on a child’s wellness — mind, body and spirit.

Treatments typically include physical therapy, occupational therapy, land and aquatic therapy, intense exercise therapy and behavioral therapy.

Complementary mind and body health practices that may be added to enhance these treatments include:

- **Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT)** - Moving muscles and joints by stretching, gentle pressure and resistance
- **Craniosacral Therapy** - Manipulating the joints of the head, spine and pelvis to affect the pressure and circulation of fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord
- **Myofascial Release** - Applying gentle pressure to specific connective tissues (fascia) to relax tight muscles, improve blood flow and increase flexibility.

Other approaches that may be included in an integrated treatment plan are: Acupuncture; Biofeedback; Dry-needling/Trigger point injections; Guided imagery/Relaxation; Massage/Reiki/Therapeutic touch; Nutrition/Supplements; Parent/Child education and Yoga therapy.

Who is involved in treatment? At the Children’s Institute, a multidisciplinary team uses a variety of treatments that can reduce the need for multiple practitioners, invasive procedures and prescription medications. Directed by a physician specializing in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, the team may also include: Physical Therapist; Occupational



Therapist; Pain Psychologist/Behavioral Therapist; Recreational Therapist; Music Therapist; Educational Support; Dietitian; Acupuncturist and Massage Therapist.

Who can benefit from an integrative approach to treatment? Our treatment program can help children and teens with chronic pain:

- associated with one or more areas of the body
- that may travel through the body
- caused by something that typically would not be considered painful (for example, a light breeze or wearing clothing)
- that limits daily activities, such as getting dressed
- that limits the ability to walk, stand or grasp something
- that causes them to discontinue participation in activities
- that causes them to miss significant amounts of school or receive home bound education (including cyber school).

What are the goals of treatment? The integrative medicine program combines the best of complementary and conventional medical therapies to develop holistic solutions for children with chronic illness, acute and chronic pain, side effects from medical treatments, and emotional challenges such as depression and anxiety. Our approach is not meant to replace traditional treatments, but rather to enhance them.

The Pain Rehabilitation team establishes individual goals for each child, which may include: Returning full functionality to the affected area; returning to school and daily activities; increasing strength, endurance and agility; decreasing sensitivity to touch and using skills to manage pain and stress.

Ultimately, the goal is long-term self-management of chronic pain to achieve an independent lifestyle.

How do I get started? To learn more, contact The Children’s Institute of Pittsburgh. As the only CARF-accredited freestanding pediatric specialty rehabilitation hospital in the region, and one of only five in the nation, we are the region’s most comprehensive provider of care to children with special and orthopedic needs.

For more information about the Pain & Integrative Medicine program, located in Squirrel Hill on the main campus of The Children’s Institute, contact us at 412.420.2400 or visit www.amazingkids.org. To make an appointment or referral, please call us at 412.420-2561.

 **The Children’s Institute**
Amazing Kids. Amazing Place.

All it takes is a ball and a net

By Pittsburgh Elite Volleyball Association



Volleyball is one of the most popular and fastest growing games in the world. According to the National Federation of State High School Associations, more girls now play volleyball than soccer, softball and basketball. Playing volleyball is a fun way to stay healthy and fit, plus moving, jumping, and hitting a ball builds strength, agility and eye-hand coordination.

The girls and coaches at Pittsburgh Elite Volleyball

Association, the longest-standing organization for the sport in Western Pennsylvania, know that playing volleyball isn't just great physical exercise. Volleyball also promotes confidence and interpersonal skills. It establishes good habits and incorporates essential life lessons, such as teamwork and sportsmanship.

Summer is a great time for kids to develop skills, make new friends, and explore new interests. Pittsburgh Elite has a wide range of summer volleyball camps for girls of all ages and skill levels. From toddlers to college prospects, Pittsburgh Elite offers camps and classes for beginner, intermediate, advanced and special needs girls. Every athlete, no matter what her ability, is challenged to learn, grow and succeed.

— "My youngest enjoyed fun, introductory level volleyball camps last year, while my teenager, who has aspirations to play

in college, chose position specific training and strength and conditioning camps. My girls can't wait to play and train this summer!"

Sandy Fowler - Zelienople

— "I remember Peydon as a little girl watching her older sister, Devin, playing for Pittsburgh Elite. And now, four years later, her older sister is watching her. It's amazing how far Peydon has come from an eleven-year-old just starting out, to a 15-year-old loving every second she has on the court at Pittsburgh Elite."

Triscia Linsenbigler- Westmoreland County

Pittsburgh Elite is located in Emsworth, just off PA Route 65, ten minutes from downtown and five minutes from Interstates 79 and 279.

This summer, all it takes is a ball and a net for your daughter to discover a love for volleyball and develop lifelong friendships at Pittsburgh Elite.

Visit www.pittsburghelitevb.org for more information and to register.



east end
412.421.8565
2345 Murray Ave, Suite 210
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

north hills
412.369.0600
4725 McKnight Road, Suite 107
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

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