

Chronic Pain Services at Western Health:

Western Health provides the following services for patients who require assessment and management of chronic pain conditions:

Multidisciplinary Pain Education and Assessment Clinic: A multidisciplinary assessment with a view to participating in one of our outpatient health independence pain programs. This will determine the treatment pathway required and is the default entry pathway for most patients

Health Independence Program: Once triaged patients will be offered an interdisciplinary rehabilitation program via group and/or individual programs/consultations. We require patients to complete and return a pain questionnaire before attending our Virtual Western Health Informed Pain (VWHIP) clinic. This involves a one hour online orientation session which includes a Webinar explaining chronic pain and the services we provide.

Note: Many patients will not benefit from waiting indefinitely to see a Pain Specialist and therefore will be discharged from the service if they decline the offer of the VWHIP clinic*. Only those who meet the criteria may be triaged to see a Pain Specialist.

**Alternative arrangements will be made for Non English Speaking patients*

Health Independence Program Information:

- Provides treatment on a time-limited basis for people over 16 years of age presenting with moderate to severe levels of chronic pain.
- Recognises that a pain cure is often not achievable with current available therapies.
- Medical management resources are limited but may be part of a multi-disciplinary pain management program and includes medication management and selected interventional pain management techniques if indicated.
- Integral to the service model is a focus on enabling patients to gain an improved ability to self-manage their condition in a way that aligns with their personal goals and that is not solely reliant on medications or medical interventions. This is to support continuing management in a primary care setting, following discharge from this specialist service.

The Chronic Pain Service operates under [Statewide Criteria](#) for Chronic Pain Referrals. In addition to these criteria, patients must be:

- Suffering from persistent or chronic pain (three months or longer) with symptoms that impact on daily activities such as work, recreation, relationships, study, school, or caring for others.
- At risk of significant functional or psychological deterioration, or medication dependence.
- Willing to explore living well with pain and willing to learn to self-manage ongoing pain.

Conditions not seen by Western Health Pain Services:

Referrals to Western Health Pain Services are not appropriate if:

- Patients have a primary substance use disorder and need referral to Drug and Alcohol services.
- Patients with primary palliative care needs require referral to Palliative Care Services.
- Patients are likely to benefit from specialist therapy targeted at a likely pain generator.
- Patients are not willing to explore living well with pain and to self-manage ongoing pain.
- Patients currently undertaking another chronic pain management program
- Patients who have previously completed a chronic pain management program for the same condition.

Note: *The clinic does not offer 'hands on' therapies such as massage, acupuncture, or hydrotherapy.*

Clinic Did Not Attend Policy:

To ensure equitable access, and reduce waiting time, please be aware that we require 24 hours' notice of inability to attend an appointment.

Failure to provide this notice results in a "Did Not Attend" (DNA). Should a patient have ONE DNA - **specialist clinics may discharge the patient depending on individual assessment of circumstances. Re-entry into the clinic will require a new referral.**

Access & Referral Priority Chronic Pain Services:

The clinical information provided in your referral will determine the triage category. The triage category will affect the timeframe in which the patient is offered an appointment.

URGENT Appointment timeframe 30 days.	ROUTINE Appointment timeframe greater than 30 days, depending on clinical need.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suspected complex regional pain syndrome• Difficult to manage cancer pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All other non-cancer pain

Condition Specific Referral Guidelines:

Key information enables Western Health to triage patients to the correct category and provide timely treatment with fewer visits to specialist clinics, creating more capacity for care. If key information is missing, the referral may be returned, and you may be asked to provide additional information. The recommended referral form is located [here](#):

Condition:	Key Information Points:	Clinical Investigations:
Suspected Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History and examination • Timing of triggering episode • Clinical features indicating possible CRPS • Psychosocial issues • Previous specialist opinions • Past treatments and the response • Other past medical history • Medication list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X-rays and other imaging (if applicable)
Chronic, Persistent Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current pain problem • Psychosocial issues • Previous specialist opinions • Past treatments and the response • Other past medical history • Medication list • Indicate if opinion regarding particular pain intervention is requested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X-rays and other imaging (if applicable)