

What is chronic pain?

- chronic pain is usually defined as pain lasting more than three months and it affects approximately 800,000 people in Scotland
 - chronic pain encompasses a variety of persistent pain symptoms – this includes musculoskeletal pain, persistent post-operative pain, and conditions such as fibromyalgia and forms of arthritis.
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Links between smoking and chronic pain:

- smoking may help to cause chronic pain and it is a factor in the development of musculoskeletal pain
 - among people with chronic pain, smokers experience higher pain intensity than non-smokers
 - a large amount of research shows that smoking harms the musculoskeletal system
 - smoking may cause some forms of rheumatoid arthritis and back pain, or make those conditions worse
 - muscles and tendons are negatively affected by smoking
 - smoking is associated with a number of complications after surgery, including issues with healing of bone fractures, tendon healing and infections.
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Misconceptions about smoking as a coping strategy:

- there is a common misconception that smoking relieves stress, anxiety and low mood
 - the rationale for the use of cigarettes as a coping strategy is the provision of a mild and temporary pain-relieving effect, whereas smoking is actually relieving the cycle of nicotine addiction
 - in terms of mental ill-health, smoking tobacco may be associated with depression and suicidal ideation among those with chronic lower back pain.
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Benefits of stopping smoking

- stopping smoking is highly advisable to reduce the risk of developing musculoskeletal diseases
- stopping smoking before and after surgery may result in substantial benefits for patients' musculoskeletal and general health
- having a generally healthy lifestyle and addressing factors such as smoking, alcohol and obesity may improve outcomes for those with chronic lower back pain.