

REFLECTIONS

A monthly source of information for beneficiaries of the Adventist Retirement Plan

6 ways to relieve pain

Antidepressants, muscle relaxers, analgesics, and anti-anxiety medications—nearly a dozen prescriptions were supposed to manage Myrna Scott's fibromyalgia symptoms. But instead of helping her feel better, the side effects—such as a severely upset stomach and a general feeling of being “out of it”—made her feel even worse.

So she decided to do something about it. She found ways to control her pain naturally—and that kick-started a lifestyle change that allowed her to drop from 10 prescriptions down to three.

Most of us don't think twice about popping an aspirin or ibuprofen if we're in pain—but pain relief doesn't have

to come from a bottle. There are plenty of natural ways we can manage existing pain—and cut pain off before it starts. Here are just a few.

1 Music Therapy

What it is: Structured use of musical experiences to restore, maintain, and improve emotional, psychological, and physical well-being. Music therapy can take many different forms; patients may prefer to listen to music or perform it. Either way, it can be helpful in pain reduction.

“Pain and music travel along the same neural pathways,” says Joanne Loewy, who oversees



Payroll Bulletin Board

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THIS MONTH: October 27

NEXT MONTH: November 27

6 ways to relieve pain *continued*

the Department of Music Therapy at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City. “In music therapy, we actually show patients ways to work with [their pain] musically. [They may] breathe with meter and harmonic framing, or they might sing.”

How to find a practitioner: The American Music Therapy Association: www.musictherapy.org

2 Exercise

What it is: Planned activity for the purpose of improving health, maintaining fitness, and strengthening the body.

Exercise can be a great way to manage pain—but that doesn’t mean you have to take up jogging or sign up for a high-intensity aerobics class. There are numerous low-impact exercise modalities that not only gently stretch and strengthen your body, but also provide a relaxation response that can also be powerful in managing pain. Simple stretching exercises, for example, can improve flexibility and help with pain control. Try an exercise DVD at home, or check for classes at your local community college or fitness center.

3 Massage Therapy

What it is: The rubbing or kneading of parts of the body to relax the muscles and stimulate circulation.

How to find a practitioner:

American Massage Therapy Association: www.amtamassage.org or (888) 843-2682

4 Prayer and Meditation

What it is: A process in which people quiet their minds, allow their thoughts to move beyond distractions, and communicate with God.

Studies at Harvard Medical School have shown that meditation can significantly reduce pain. Prayer can also be used as a way of focusing beyond the pain.

5 Biofeedback

What it is: Training subjects to control usually involuntary functions such as brain activity, blood pressure, muscle tension, and heart rate.

Subjects are connected to computerized sensors that show them when their muscles are tense, for instance, by flashing a light or beeping. The goal is to slow the flashing or beeping by relaxing the muscles; the subjects learn what different levels of tension feel like as they do so. Eventually they can use their newfound skills without being hooked up to a machine.

How to find a practitioner: Biofeedback Certification Institute of America: www.bcia.org

6 Deep Breathing

What it is: Exercises that encourage good breathing habits, which reduce stress and effect relaxation.

“The process of breathing lies at the center of every action and reaction we make or have, and so, by returning to it, we go to the core of our stress response,” writes Donna Farhi in *The Breathing Book*. “By refining and improving the quality of our breathing, we can feel its positive impact on all aspects of our being.”

To relieve pain, Farhi recommends exhaling (rather than holding your breath) when you anticipate a painful stimulus; stroking a painful area lightly to re-establish a connection with it; and breathing deeply, slowly, and consciously.

Elisabeth Deffner has been published in numerous publications, including the Los Angeles Times and National Geographic Kids. She lives with her family in Orange, California.

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SHARP Corner

Medicare Open Enrollment is a window of opportunity for you!

The Medicare Open Enrollment period begins this month on October 15 and goes through December 7. During this period, you can make changes to your Medicare Advantage or drug coverage. In September, you received the Annual Notice of Coverage (ANOC), from your insurance company. The ANOC informs you of any changes the insurance company is making to your plan. This includes benefit, deductible and monthly premium changes. Be sure to review the ANOC carefully. Also, it very important to review any changes being made to the drug formulary that might impact drugs you are taking.

After you read the ANOC, if you wish to make a change in your insurance benefits, call Aon Retiree Health Exchange at 1-844-360-4714. Make an appointment with a Benefit Advisor licensed for your state.

Medicare rules require you to call and request an appointment before the Benefit Advisor may reach out to you.

The timeline for open enrollment is limited, so call now to make your appointment with a Benefit Advisor. Important: Do not call the insurance company for enrollment changes, or you put your HRA (Health Reimbursement Account) eligibility at risk—call Aon. Also, be sure that if you've changed your phone number or address in the last year, go to www.adventistretirement.org/contact-us/ and send us that information!

Remember, SHARP policy states that you must be enrolled in a medical or a drug plan through Aon Retiree Health Exchange to be HRA eligible.

If you do not keep an enrollment through Aon Retiree Health Exchange, you will permanently lose your HRA benefit.

Webinar helps you prepare for Medicare Open Enrollment

Aon's Retiree Health Exchange Informational Webinar is now available on our website. Visit www.adventistretirement.org; this presentation will review the Medicare rules of enrollment, SHARP HRA benefits, and will help you prepare for the Medicare annual open enrollment period (October 15 – December 7). Click on the SHARP tab and scroll down to the "Webinars/Videos" section. Select the Adventist Retirement Webinar to view.

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www.adventistretirement.org

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