



## Fall Newsletter - Emotional Weight Loss

At one time or another, most of us have been on a diet to lose weight. In some cases the weight gain has only existed for a short period of time (e.g., after overindulging over the holidays). In other cases the extra weight has existed for several years. Common strategies for weight loss usually include: fad diets, exercise, developing new eating habits or all of the above. No matter what strategy is employed, success can be elusive.

The concept of weight gain applies to emotions as well. We have all experienced the heaviness of stress, sadness or emotional distress when challenged by difficult life events such as divorce or loss of a loved one. Ideally, the emotional impact of the life event is short-lived and the emotional weight gain is temporary. However, there are also times where the emotional weight gain is maintained because the life event is longer term.

Unfortunately chronic pain is one of the biggest contributors to long-term emotional weight gain. Although chronic pain is a physical condition, patients also experience some degree of negative, heavy emotions that can weigh them down. If not managed properly, the negative emotions associated with a chronic pain condition can lead to chronic emotional weight gain.

How does pain-related emotional weight gain become chronic? Usually when the increased level of pain begins it is considered a temporary situation. The hope is that the right medication, procedure or surgery will “cure” the pain. However, when the pain persists and becomes chronic, emotional weight gain increases and is maintained as patients wonder, “How much more can I take?” or “Will this ever end?”

As many of us have come to know, chronic pain can cause emotional devastation. It changes your life and has a ripple effect that impacts all the relationships you have with others. Over time chronic pain can make you feel overwhelmed, defeated and powerless. The good news is that it doesn't have to. There are things you can do to minimize the emotional weight gain that is associated with a chronic pain condition. The other side of this page provides information that will help you do an Emotional Weight Assessment. It is divided into two steps that (1) help you assess your emotional weight status and (2) help you start working on reducing the emotional weight that you carry due to chronic pain. ...

For more information please visit our website at [www.ThePainCenter.com](http://www.ThePainCenter.com)

- **Don't overindulge**
- **Avoid “junk food” thoughts and feelings.**
- **Know your weaknesses.**
- **Exercise good thinking skills**

**As the Director of the Wellness Program, Dr. Peper works with patients developing customized treatment plans to assist them in effectively managing their chronic pain and returning to a productive life.**

