

## The guide for managing chronic conditions

Some conditions stay in our body for a long time. This is what 'chronic' means. The symptoms and how severely they affect us may change with time, but the original condition stays there. There are a number of things, which if done right from the beginning will greatly help manage the condition better; both in the short and long term.

People would like to know:

- the name of the condition
- the nature of the condition
- how long will it affect them
- will it affect them all the time? Or will it return in cycles?
- what they can do to treat the symptoms and;
- if there is a cure for the condition

It is very common to feel unsettled and worried about the new diagnosis and this is not limited to adults, but affects children and adolescents. Most of the stress comes from the fact that people don't know much about the new condition. **It is very important to voice these concerns and talk about them early in the management plan.** There are many factors which will help managing these feelings early. These may include:

- having a diagnosis and learning about it as much as possible from reliable sources
- being heard and taken notice of individual symptoms
- having a management plan; medications, procedures, **physio/ occupational therapy** or **podiatry** and;
- talking to a **psychologist** and if needed, having counselling sessions

Most people feel better after the above needs have been met with, and their anxiety and stress levels settle. As they learn more about the condition they can help themselves and even support others who have just been diagnosed. It is highly recommended to have regular assessments (less frequently as time goes on) to ensure they stay on top of it all and have full control.