

READ this text, paying attention to the words in bold.

Then complete the comprehension statements:

What is the role of medicines in managing chronic pain?

In some cases, medicines can be helpful in managing chronic pain. These could include over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, supplements, and prescription medicines. You can buy OTC pain medicines, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, without a doctor's prescription.

However, before taking any pain medicine (even OTC medicines), talk to your doctor or pharmacist. They can advise whether the medicine is suitable for you, and whether it's likely to help you manage your specific type of pain.

In addition, some people find other medicines helpful, including:

- Antidepressants — some medicines that are used to treat depression, such as amitriptyline, are also sometimes prescribed by doctors to reduce pain.
- Anticonvulsants or antiepileptic medicines — medicines commonly used to treat epilepsy can also help manage nerve pain. They include pregabalin and gabapentin.

It is important to note that, in Australia, these medicines are only available with a doctor's prescription.

What medicines are not recommended to treat chronic (non-cancer) pain?

Opioid medicines (such as oxycodone, morphine, and codeine) can be used to treat:

- acute (short-term) pain, such as pain after surgery or an injury; **or**
- chronic pain for people with cancer.

However, it's important to remember that opioids are **not** recommended to help people with chronic, non-cancer pain.

Moreover, using prescription opioids for an extended period of time can be dangerous and may be addictive.

In fact, evidence shows that the longer a person takes an opioid, the less pain relief they will receive. This is because the body gets used to the dose of opioid that's being taken — known as 'tolerance'. When a person has tolerance to opioid medicines, they need higher doses of the medicine to feel the same effect. **Nevertheless**, higher doses also increase the risk of serious side effects.

Furthermore, long-term use of opioids can also make someone more sensitive to pain. This is known as 'opioid-induced hyperalgesia'.

Comprehension Statements (Choose the correct option)

1. Over-the-counter medicines / Prescription medicines **can be bought without** a doctor's prescription.
2. It is advised to speak to a doctor / pharmacist **before taking** any kind of pain medicine.
3. Antidepressants and anticonvulsants **may be prescribed to manage** pain / depression.
4. In Australia, these medicines are available only with a doctor's note / prescription.
5. Opioids are recommended only for short-term pain / chronic non-cancer pain.
6. Using opioids for a long time may lead to tolerance / increased effectiveness.
7. Tolerance means the body reacts more strongly / needs more of the medicine to feel the same relief.
8. Long-term opioid use can reduce / increase sensitivity to pain.

Grammar Focus: Using Connectors in Medical English

As you saw in the words in bold in the previous text, connectors help show **relationships between ideas**. Below is a list of different types of relationships and examples of connectors you can use in each case:

Type of Connection	Common Connectors	Example
Contrast / Opposite	however, whereas, although, on the other hand	The patient appears stable. However, the pain has worsened.
Addition	moreover, in addition, furthermore	The medication reduced swelling. Moreover, it improved mobility.
Example / Clarification	for instance, for example, such as	Some conditions require long-term care. For instance, chronic arthritis.
Result / Consequence	therefore, as a result, thus	The scan showed no issues. Therefore, no surgery was needed.

Cause / Reason

because, since, as

The patient missed the appointment because he was in pain.

Comparison

whereas, while, similarly

NSAIDs reduce inflammation, whereas opioids target pain signals.

 *TIP: Using a variety of connectors improves clarity and coherence of your writing.*

Choose the Correct Connector

Choose the correct connector from the two options in bold.

1. The patient had no fever. **However** / **For example**, his joints were swollen.
2. The rash was localized. **For instance** / **Therefore**, only the hands and feet were affected.
3. Corticosteroids reduce inflammation, **whereas** / **because** antibiotics treat infections.
4. The pain increased over time. **Thus** / **Moreover**, the patient returned for a follow-up.
5. The injury is healing well. **In addition** / **Whereas**, mobility has improved significantly.
6. He refused to take the medication **since** / **whereas** it caused nausea.
7. Chronic pain is common in elderly patients. **However** / **Moreover**, it is often underreported.
8. Some treatments are effective for back pain. **For instance** / **Therefore**, exercise therapy shows good results.
9. The patient has no history of trauma, **whereas** / **therefore** the pain may be due to inflammation.
10. The symptoms improved with rest. **However** / **For instance**, they returned after physical activity.
11. The MRI showed no abnormalities. **Therefore** / **Moreover**, the physician recommended a second test.
12. Opioids can reduce severe pain. **However** / **Whereas**, they may lead to dependency.