



# TEAMSTERS TRUST BENEFITS INSIDER

KAISER PERMANENTE



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## The All New wateamsters.com

### Answers to your benefits questions in one convenient place

Come check out the all new wateamsters.com! The Trust's updated and newly designed website is your one stop for information about your Kaiser benefits, wellness programs, forms, contact information and more.

The Trust website is designed with you in mind. It gives you an overview of all your health benefits, answers common questions, and connects you to no-cost wellness programs available to you as a Trust participant. The site is mobile-friendly, easy to use, and up to date on the latest plan information.

### Some of the new features include:

- **Trust news blog**—a great place to learn about plan updates and changes, ways to maximize your benefits and save on costs, and to get health tips on how to feel your best.
- **Enrollment and eligibility section**—get answers to common questions about when and how to enroll, and who is eligible for benefits.
- **Expanded forms and resources library**—looking for a form, a copy of your Summary Plan Description, or even a copy of a past Trust newsletter? Now, you can find all that and more online.

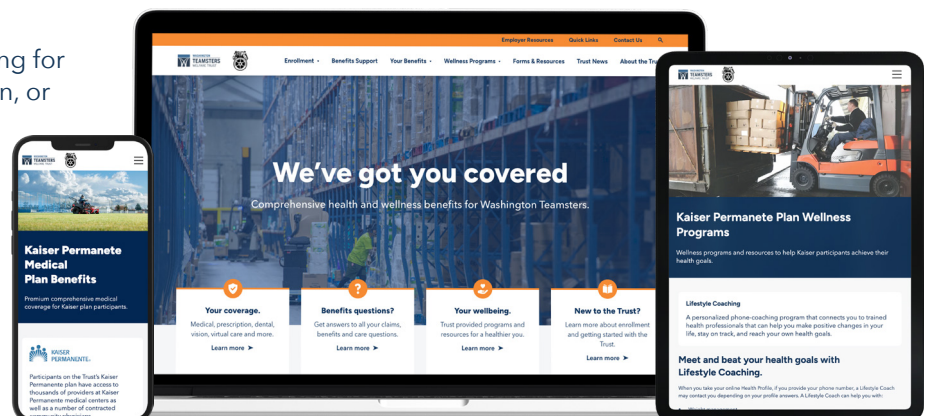
Plus, we recently sent a professional photographer out to some western locations to capture some images of Trust participants at work. So, while on the site you might see a location or a face you recognize!

### Did you know?

That on the Trust's website you can:

- Learn about your medical and other benefits
- Find a no-cost wellness program
- Download common forms
- Learn healthy tips and about plan information

To learn more visit  
[wateamsters.com](https://wateamsters.com)





# The Link Between Pain and Depression

## Understanding how chronic conditions impact our mental health

Do you ever feel like your mind and body are in a loop of discomfort and distress? It's a reality that many people navigate every day, yet its impact on how you feel, and your quality of life, is often underestimated.

The link between chronic pain and mental health is not always apparent at first glance. You may not realize that your headaches and back pain are symptoms of depression or anxiety, and similarly you may not realize that your

chronic pain is leading to feelings of hopelessness and frustration.

Adding to that, people with mental distress have been shown to experience more severe and long-lasting pain than others. This can result in a cycle where chronic pain feels worse and more pronounced, and depressive bouts feel deeper and harder to manage.

Discomfort from health conditions like back pain, nerve pain, cancers, heart issues, irritable bowel syndrome,

fibromyalgia and other conditions, can cause a number of problems that contribute to higher levels of pain – such as not being able to fall or stay asleep, increased stress levels, and difficulty concentrating.

## Understanding the impact of chronic pain on mental health is crucial for effective treatment.

If you find yourself in a loop of physical pain and stress/depression, there is hope.

Evidence has shown that treating depression and anxiety can often lead to a significant reduction in chronic pain. And mental health care can come in a variety of forms. Here are five ways to treat both chronic pain and mental distress.



### 1. Talk therapy

Talking with a counselor or other mental health professional can be effective in treating both chronic pain and depression/anxiety. A technique called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helps people develop coping strategies, challenge negative thought patterns, and improve emotional regulation, which can enhance resilience in the face of chronic pain.



### 2. Stress-reduction techniques

Incorporating physical activity, exercise, meditation, journaling, healthy dietary habits, learned coping skills and other strategies can complement medical interventions and promote holistic well-being.



### 3. Support groups and peer counseling

Connecting with others facing similar challenges can provide invaluable support, validation, and coping strategies.



### 4. Medications

Judicious use of medications, including pain relievers, antidepressants, and anti-anxiety medications, under the guidance of a health professional, may relieve both pain and depression because of shared chemical messengers in the brain. Talk to your doctor about what is right for you.



### 5. Chronic pain management programs

Kaiser Lifestyle Coaching and Kaiser's Living Well with Chronic Conditions workshops are two programs available to you that provide a team approach to treatment, both medical and psychiatric, while connecting you to resources and support.

To get symptoms of pain and depression under control, you may need to work with your medical team to treat both conditions. Talk to your doctors about what might be right for you.

# Understanding Inflammation

## How the foods you eat can impact on how you feel

Chronic inflammation is more than just a passing discomfort, it can be a serious health concern. People with diabetes, heart disease, arthritis or injuries often experience chronic inflammation, which can lead to ongoing body pain, poor digestion, sluggishness, and more.

Widespread inflammation can also occur with conditions such as lupus, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and psoriasis—and can be very disruptive to day-to-day functioning.

Many turn to over-the-counter nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs

(NSAIDs) or prescription medications like corticosteroids to manage their inflammation pain. But did you know that your diet can also play a major role in helping bring down chronic and persistent inflammation?

## Fight Inflammation with Food

The food you eat can either help fight inflammation or fuel it, making it worse. It can be tough to remove tasty and loved foods from your diet, and adding in foods you may not regularly reach for—but the results can make a huge impact on how you feel.







## Take action

That you could have your very own health coach at no cost to you. A Kaiser health coach can help you better understand your inflammation and make dietary changes that improve your health.







To learn more visit [www.kp.org/wa](http://www.kp.org/wa).



## Some foods that make inflammation worse:

-  **Saturated and trans fats**—often found in red meat, processed meat (like deli meat and hot dogs), and fried foods
-  **Refined carbohydrates** found in white bread, pasta and pastries
-  **Added sugars** found in soda, sweets, energy drinks and baked goods
-  Regular or excessive consumption of **alcohol**

## Some foods that help reduce inflammation:

-  **Berries**, such as strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries
-  **Leafy greens**, such as spinach, kale, and collard greens
-  **Fatty fish** includes salmon, mackerel, tuna and sardines
-  **Olive oil** is a great source of healthy fats
-  **Nuts and seeds**, including walnuts, almonds, and flaxseeds
-  **Whole grains** such as quinoa, brown rice, and oats

## Simple Swaps for a Healthier Diet

If an anti-inflammatory diet feels overwhelming, start with small, sustainable changes, swapping out known inflammation inducing foods for an anti-inflammatory option. Such as making brown rice, instead of white rice, or skipping the cookie and grabbing a low sugar yogurt instead. Eating well isn't just about avoiding disease—it's about feeling your best every day. A diet rich in whole, nutrient-packed foods can help keep inflammation at bay and support your long-term well-being.





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#### THE TAKEAWAY

## Understanding My Benefits

### Enrollment

Whether you are new to the Trust (if so, welcome!) or you have been here awhile, you may have questions about eligibility for benefits and when to enroll. Here are two commonly asked questions:

#### When should I enroll?



**New hires:** Once you meet the coverage requirements you will be sent a letter letting you know that you are eligible for coverage. The quickest way to get enrolled when coverage begins is online. Completing enrollment online ensures that medical claims are not delayed.



**Active employees:** You are required to re-enroll every year and verify your information, even if you do not have any changes to make. Annual enrollment takes place every Fall, starting November 1.

To learn more visit: [wateamsters.com/enrollment](https://wateamsters.com/enrollment)

#### Who can enroll?

Employees who meet the requirements in their participating employer's collective bargaining agreement are eligible to enroll in the Trust. Typically, this means that they are an active employee (not retired) and working the minimum number of compensable hours (usually 80 hours a month – i.e. full-time employment) for any one participating employer.

Eligible employees may also enroll certain dependents.