

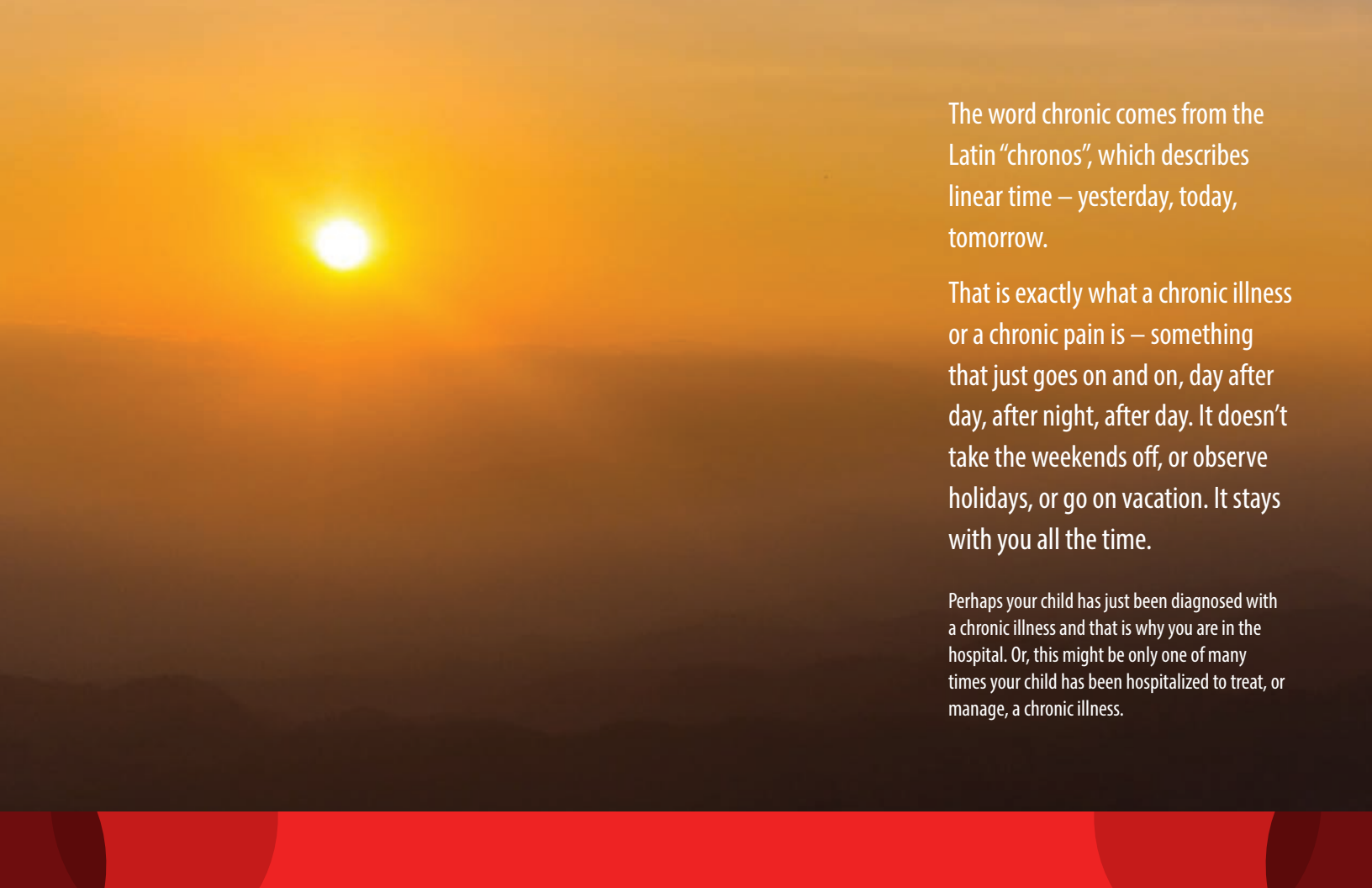


Children's National™

Chaplaincy Services



Living
With
Chronic
Pain or a
Chronic
Illness

The background of the slide is a photograph of a bright sun in a hazy, orange sky. The sun is positioned in the upper left quadrant, and its light creates a soft glow across the sky. The horizon line is visible in the lower third of the image, with a dark, silhouetted landscape below it. The overall color palette is warm, dominated by oranges, yellows, and browns.

The word chronic comes from the Latin “chronos”, which describes linear time – yesterday, today, tomorrow.

That is exactly what a chronic illness or a chronic pain is – something that just goes on and on, day after day, after night, after day. It doesn’t take the weekends off, or observe holidays, or go on vacation. It stays with you all the time.

Perhaps your child has just been diagnosed with a chronic illness and that is why you are in the hospital. Or, this might be only one of many times your child has been hospitalized to treat, or manage, a chronic illness.

Sometimes chronic pain is part of a chronic illness; sometimes it's the result of an injury or other event.

Watching someone you love always be sick, or having to be careful not to be sick, or always being in pain is so very hard.

God of comfort, is this the new "normal" for my child's life? We are going to have to learn so many new ways of being. Everything I always thought I would worry about in raising my child has changed. It can be done- because it MUST be done. But I don't want my child to have to live like this: always watching, always waiting for the

next problem, the next pain. Give me strength and patience to live this life's journey with my child. Give me wisdom to learn from my child's strengths. Help us to find, and hold, and celebrate each moment of joy. May we store them up for the times when the days and nights are long and difficult; help us to remember you and your presence with us through all things. Raising a child is a glorious, joyous process. It is "forever to have your

heart go walking about outside your body."¹ We want to protect them from everything! But hurts of all sorts happen to them' there is no way to bubble-wrap them against life. We would take all their ills and pains upon ourselves if we only could, however.

God of all life, of all hope and peace. I can not know just what my child is going through, how much it hurts, how



tired s/he is. Since I can not take away what hurts, give me the willingness to help her/him tell me what s/he needs. Give me a heart and mind to share a joy filled life with her/him in spite of difficulties. And give me a spirit to smile with her/him, cry with, and forever keep her/him tenderly.

Your child certainly does not want to hurt or be always sick. Every child is different in the way they cope. You may have a complainer – or you may have a child who almost never complains.

Neither one is right or wrong. But you may want to pay attention to whether you experience your child as wanting to talk about what they feel, and how you feel. If you are uncomfortable, it will be hard for your child to bring up their concerns with you.



You may want to find someone you can talk to first so that you can be calm and honest with your child.

Remember – children will typically not bring up a subject if they feel it will upset their parents/family. After all, they rely on you to care for them – if you are upset, they may feel you will not be able to provide that care. A child's anxieties are not rational.

Two short prayers to pray with your child:

Dear God, some days it's really hard to live with this _____; today has been a hard day. We pray now for some comfort and for a better day tomorrow. Help us remember that you love us.

Dear God, some days are better days. Today was a better day. Thank you for hours without pain, for good times together with people we love; for laughter, for a good sleep. Help us remember that you love us.



**For more information, contact your chaplains
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