

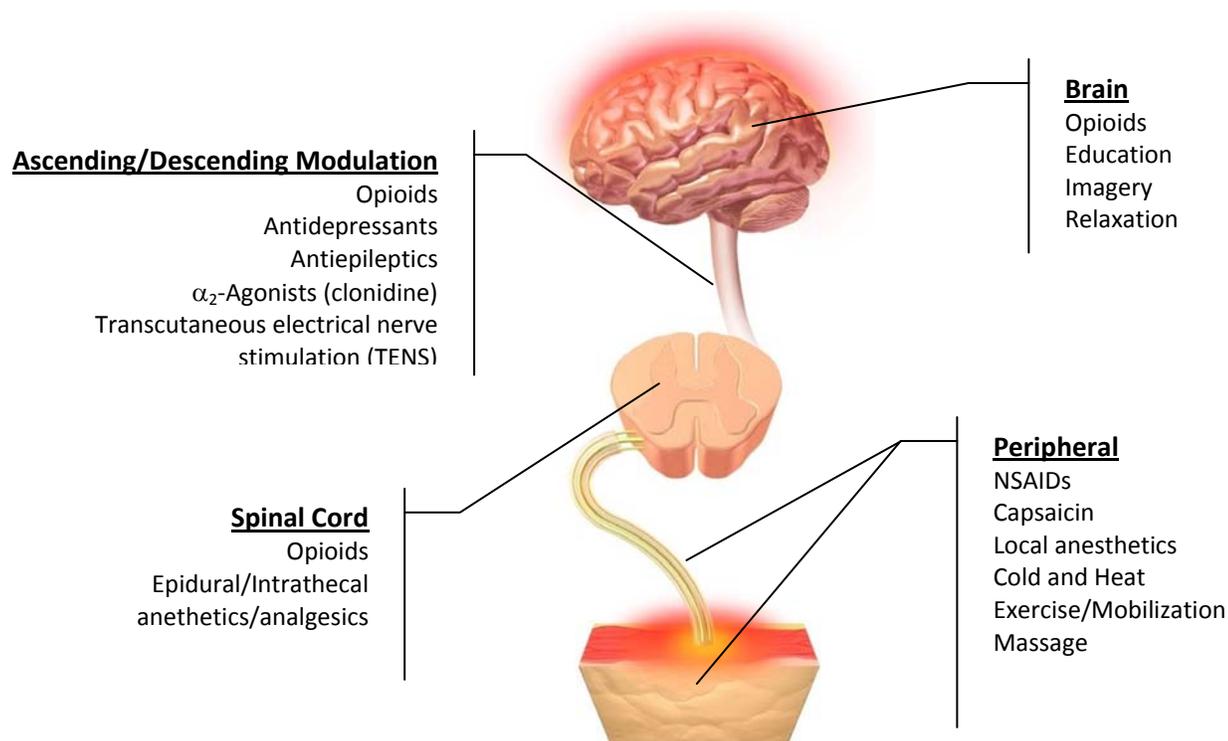
**Multimodal therapy** is currently recommended for effective pain control. The term is used to describe the use of combinations of analgesics that have different mechanisms of action (e.g., opioids, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and local anesthetics), which can result in additive or synergistic analgesia while at the same time lowering the total doses of analgesics required for pain control resulting in fewer side effects. Multimodal therapy also refers to the use of a combination of pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic interventions that together produce superior and balanced analgesia. Combining nonpharmacologic approaches with drug therapy including patient information, reassurance, and the opportunity to use either cognitive-behavioral techniques (e.g., relaxation, imagery, meditation, music) and/or physical strategies (e.g., cold, heat, exercise) is essential for any type of pain management.

**The rationale** behind multimodal therapy is to combine strategies that work at various steps in the pain pathway (transduction, transmission, perception, and modulation). Various techniques are appropriate for different patients and the selection of a particular combination of treatments must be individualized. Perioperative interventions include NSAIDs, opioids, local anesthetic wound infiltration and nerve blocks along with patient education, splinting of incisions, and ice packs. Chronic pain interventions often include combinations of conventional analgesics (NSAIDs, acetaminophen, opioids) with adjuvant analgesics (e.g., antidepressants, antiepileptics) as well as exercise and education on coping strategies. Combination therapies target the primary cause of pain, associated comorbidities, and the psychological components of the patient's pain experience.

**Cognitive-behavioral strategies** for coping with pain, such as progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and meditation work by helping control physiological and psychological responses that contribute to pain (for more information see Fast Fact "Nonpharmacologic approaches to managing pain").

**Physical strategies** include local cold/heat to diminish the inflammatory response, and exercise/mobilization to improve flexibility and restore function more quickly (e.g., arthritis stiffness/discomfort improves with activity).

**Patient education** is critical for effective multimodal therapy. Understanding the pain diagnosis, options for management and setting realistic goals enhance patient responsibility, thereby helping change the perception of pain and increase a person's sense of control over it.



**References:**

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