

# Musculoskeletal care

A coordinated, connected approach to managing these common – and costly – conditions

## Musculoskeletal conditions are a leading workforce health problem

More than 1 in 2 employees suffers from a musculoskeletal condition, causing them to miss an average of 12 workdays a year.<sup>1</sup> These conditions account for nearly 20% of all doctor visits – and \$980 billion in health care costs and lost wages each year.<sup>2</sup> So it's no surprise that 44% of employers rank musculoskeletal issues as the top health condition impacting their costs – while 85% rank it among the top 3.<sup>3</sup>

## More than half of all employees suffer from a musculoskeletal condition

### What are musculoskeletal conditions?

Musculoskeletal conditions affect the muscles, bones, joints, and connective tissues. Symptoms typically include pain and limitations to mobility, dexterity, and overall functioning that can reduce employees' ability to work.

### Some of the most common musculoskeletal conditions are:

- Arthritis
- Back, neck, and shoulder pain
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Sprains, strains, and tears
- Tendonitis

### Musculoskeletal conditions are a drain on health and productivity

A company with 100 employees can attribute

600

MISSED  
WORKDAYS  
PER YEAR

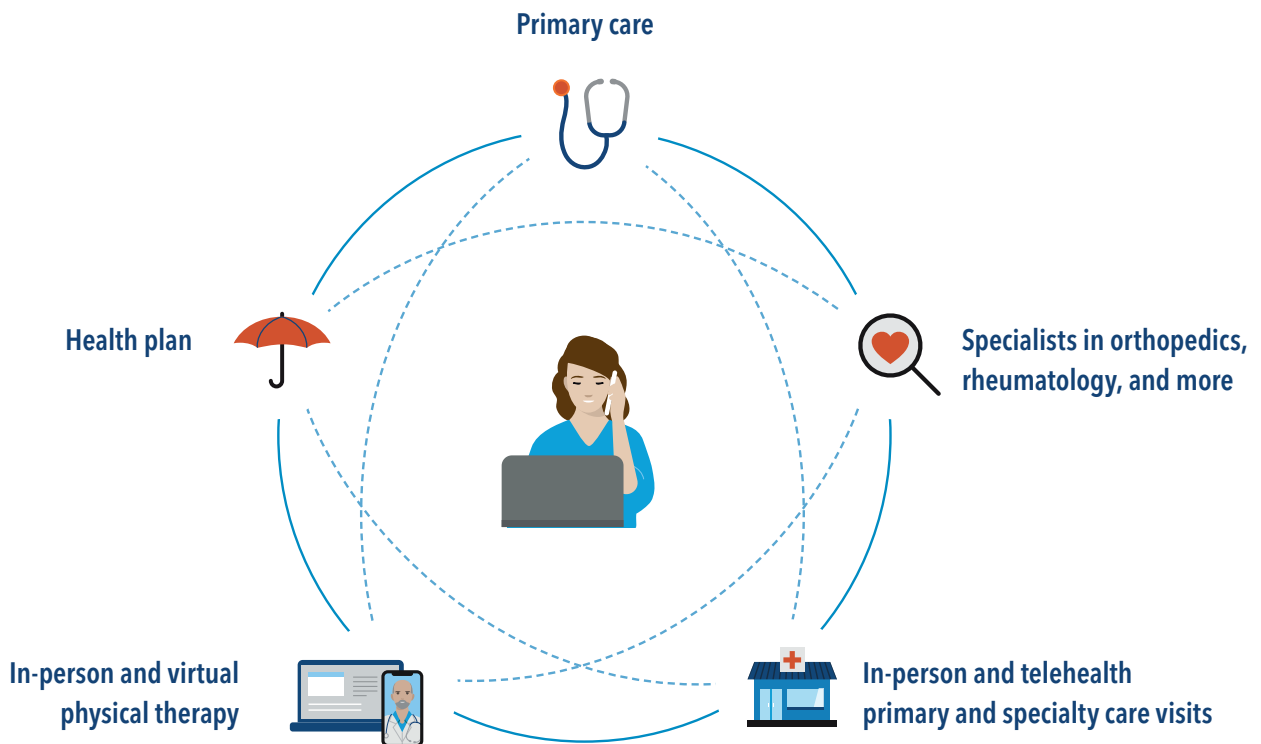


to musculoskeletal conditions.<sup>4</sup>

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## Musculoskeletal care at Kaiser Permanente

Most conditions can be prevented – and treated successfully – with the right care and support. At Kaiser Permanente, everything your employees need is available in one connected system that's designed to make life easier and recovery faster.



### Coordinated care and coverage makes getting care easy

Kaiser Permanente doctors, facilities, and health plans are part of one connected system. So your employees don't need to find their own specialists or wonder what's covered by their health plan.

### Multidisciplinary teams work together seamlessly

Kaiser Permanente care teams collaborate across locations and specialties – sharing information and expertise to deliver better, more effective care. Treatment can evolve with your employees' needs, and we coordinate their care journey from start to finish.

### Employees' health records are updated at every care touch point


Your employee's diagnoses, treatment plans, and progress are all captured in their electronic health record. So their entire care team has more information from the start – which can improve care and outcomes.

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## Spotlight on virtual physical therapy – improving access, adherence, and outcomes

Physical therapy (PT) can significantly reduce chronic pain and prevent costly procedures and surgeries. Less invasive treatment also means shorter recovery times and less absenteeism. But only about 10% of employees who would benefit from PT ever get it – and less than 25% of them complete their course of treatment.<sup>5</sup> At Kaiser Permanente, physical therapy is prescribed before other, costlier, more invasive interventions are considered.

Cost and inconvenience are the top 2 barriers to adherence.<sup>6</sup> Virtual PT is as effective as in-person treatment, while improving convenience, boosting adherence, and minimizing unnecessary visits and procedures – and ultimately reducing health care costs for employers and employees alike.<sup>7,8</sup>



**Virtual PT is proven to improve adherence**

Studies show up to **45% higher** adherence rates<sup>9</sup>

## Did you know?

Nearly 40% of employers are considering adding third-party virtual musculoskeletal care benefits in 2022.<sup>10</sup> At Kaiser Permanente, virtual PT is built in – at **no additional charge**. And unlike with third-party vendors, our virtual PT is connected to your employees' overall health care experience through their electronic health record.

## Integrated virtual PT at Kaiser Permanente

Kaiser Permanente clinicians prescribe customized PT regimens, and members receive an email with a link to their unique, video-based program. Employees can complete their PT routine anytime, anywhere by signing onto kp.org or the Kaiser Permanente app. They digitally report on how challenging or painful each activity is as they complete each exercise – and feedback is captured in their electronic health record, where clinicians can track adherence, measure progress, and adjust treatment to support faster healing.

## The value of virtual PT in our connected system

- ✓ Less invasive – and less costly – than other procedures and surgeries.
- ✓ Personalized PT regimens are based on your employees' specific diagnoses.
- ✓ Convenient, on-demand access at home. No need to commute or take time off work.
- ✓ Real-time feedback helps clinicians optimize treatment and improve outcomes.

## Case study: Virtual PT as a complement to surgical intervention

Members who participated in Kaiser Permanente's virtual patient education and home exercise pilot program prior to total joint replacement surgery showed promising results.

**15%** better outcomes

**62%** fewer home health visits

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## A better approach to musculoskeletal care

With Kaiser Permanente, your employees get highly effective, easily accessible musculoskeletal care that's covered by their health plan and coordinated with their overall health care experience. Virtual physical therapy options make it easy for them to manage musculoskeletal health issues before they become serious. And they get coordinated, connected support that helps them recover faster – while minimizing costs and time off work.



**Visit [kp.org/medical-excellence](https://kp.org/medical-excellence) to learn more about Kaiser Permanente –**  
or talk to your account representative for more information about our excellence  
in musculoskeletal care.

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1. "Fast Facts: Musculoskeletal Conditions," United States Bone and Joint Initiative, 2018. 2. See note 1. 3. "Large Employers Double Down on Efforts to Stem Rising Benefit Costs which are Expected to Top \$15000 per Employee in 2020," National Business Group on Health, August 13, 2019. 4. See note 1. 5. "Meeting the Needs of the On-Demand Consumer: High-tech through High-Touch," National Business Group on Health, April 1, 2019. 6. "Addressing Musculoskeletal Conditions and Physical Therapy Needs with Virtual Solutions," National Business Group on Health, October 16, 2020. 7. Michelle Cottrell, et. al., "Telehealth for Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy," *Musculoskeletal Science & Practice*, August 2020. 8. See note 5. 9. Rachel Arndt, "Physical Therapy and Rehab Go Virtual," *Modern Healthcare*, June 23, 2018. 10. "Large Employers Accelerating Adoption of Virtual Care, Mental Health Services for 2021, Business Group on Health Survey Finds," National Business Group on Health, August 18, 2020.