

# Midwest Pain Clinics

## Patient-Centered Pain Management

By Angella A. Arndt

### Do you suffer from pain that interferes with your daily activities?

According to a 2019 CDC survey, approximately 20 percent of adults in the United States have chronic pain. Even if the cause of the pain can't be fully cured, many cases of chronic pain can be successfully managed. For local expertise in pain management, reach out to the team at Midwest Pain Clinics.

Pain management is the field of medicine focusing on the diagnosis and management of pain. This approach strives to reduce pain both physically and emotionally by seeking alternatives to high-risk surgeries and long-term use of addictive drugs. "We try to identify the underlying cause of pain," says Dr. Kevin Balter, a physician at Midwest Pain Clinics, "but if we can't figure it out, we don't let that get in the way of providing appropriate care." For example, until recently, fibromyalgia wasn't believed to be an actual condition by many physicians because it was not well understood. The diagnosis gained credibility once the FDA approved several drugs to reduce fibromyalgia pain, and patients can now receive effective treatment for this condition.

Dr. Balter has over 20 years of experience in interventional pain management. He trained at Northeastern Ohio University College of Medicine, Mount Sinai Medical Center, and Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dr. Balter is board-certified in both pain management and anesthesiology. This fall, he will be teaching pain management to medical students and residents at Creighton.

Dr. Balter's inspiration to enter the field of pain management came from his aunt, who had Parkinson's disease. At the time, pain was not recognized as a symptom of Parkinson's, and physicians did not take his aunt's reports of pain seriously. Dr. Balter was in medical school at the time, and he became an advocate for his aunt, asking questions and searching for a physician who could help. Finally, he found a pain management physician whose treatment changed her life. "My aunt was able to live out the remainder of her life essentially pain-free, which dramatically improved her quality of life."

Midwest Pain Clinics has an extensive team, including physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and physical therapists. They plan to add behavioral therapy services soon. In addition, the surgery center brings the opportunity to provide a broad spectrum of injections and surgical procedures. "This flexibility helps us meet our patients' needs," Dr. Balter notes, "because the bureaucracy of larger medical institutions doesn't constrain us." For example, anxious patients undergoing a procedure may receive IV sedation, even if their insurance company won't cover it. The clinic accepts all forms of insurance, including Medicare and Medicaid. Payment plans are also available for patients with no insurance or with high deductibles.

The team treats a wide variety of pain, including head-

ache and migraine pain, back pain, fibromyalgia pain, joint pain, diabetic neuropathy, and arthritic pain. "We offer just about ev-

erything needed for pain management care, including medication management, physical therapy, and the surgery center," Dr. Balter says. "It's often difficult for patients to travel around town for appointments with different providers. By offering all services required under one roof, we can have a coordinated team approach to care and save patients time and expense while achieving good outcomes." The team approach is essential because many patients are referred for complex problems that require a combination of treatments.

They see many patients with arthritis pain in the neck, low back, hips, and knees. "Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) is an effective treatment for arthritis, even when narcotics, chiropractic, physical therapy, and spine surgery have failed." RFA is a minimally invasive procedure in which a needle is inserted toward target nerves. A radio wave produces an electrical current that heats a small area of nerve tissue, which decreases pain signals. "RFA can also be a helpful alternative to joint replacement surgery."

Why should someone choose Midwest Pain Clinics? "We take pain complaints seriously," Dr. Balter asserts. "We try to treat the underlying problem by finding solutions other than surgery. Our board-certified physicians look for alternative methods of pain control, such as a combination of modalities to treat pain, before prescribing narcotics."

"We help a lot of patients who have lost confidence in the health care system," Dr. Balter concludes. "Some of these patients have had pain for 20 years without finding an answer and may be angry and hostile when they first visit our office. Our biggest reward is when these same patients start to feel better, come in smiling, and thank us for helping them."

Midwest Pain Clinics is located at 825 North 90th Street in Omaha, with additional locations in Bellevue and Columbus, Nebraska; Missouri Valley and Red Oak, Iowa; and Dakota Dunes, South Dakota. Call them at 402-391-7246 or find them online at [midwestpainclinics.com](http://midwestpainclinics.com). **WE**



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