

media fact sheet

BREAKTHROUGH PAIN IN PATIENTS WITH CANCER

What is breakthrough pain?	Breakthrough pain is a transitory flare of moderate-to-severe pain in patients with otherwise controlled persistent pain.
How is breakthrough pain related to chronic pain?	<p>Nearly 50 million Americans suffer from chronic pain, a condition that often consists of two distinct components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <u>Persistent pain</u>: pain that is constant throughout the day that is often managed with around-the-clock opioids- <u>Breakthrough pain</u>: flares of pain commonly characterized by their rapid onset, moderate-to-severe intensity, and relatively short duration which occur in the context of otherwise well-managed persistent pain <p>Breakthrough pain needs independent assessment and treatment as part of an integrated chronic pain management plan.</p>
What is the prevalence of breakthrough cancer pain?	An estimated 51-89 percent of all people diagnosed with cancer who have controlled persistent pain, experience breakthrough pain.
What causes breakthrough pain?	There are three types of breakthrough pain: incident pain, spontaneous pain and end-of-dose failure. Incident pain is a type of breakthrough pain that is caused by a specific “event,” such as walking or coughing. Breakthrough pain may also occur without a readily identifiable cause, or spontaneous pain, which is a type of breakthrough pain that is unpredictable. End-of-dose failure pain occurs before a scheduled dose of an around-the-clock analgesic used to treat patients with persistent pain.
What are common characteristics of breakthrough pain in patients with cancer?	Breakthrough pain is commonly characterized by its rapid onset, moderate-to-severe intensity, and relatively short duration. A typical breakthrough pain episode in patients with cancer may peak in as little as three minutes and last up to 30 minutes; episodes may occur up to four times per day. (These numbers are based on medians, the midpoint of the range of data observed in studies.)
How is cancer-related breakthrough pain diagnosed?	In patients with controlled persistent pain, breakthrough pain can be characterized by its onset, intensity, frequency, and duration.
How is breakthrough pain treated in patients with cancer?	In addition to treatment for persistent pain with around-the-clock opioid therapy, supplemental, or “rescue” doses, of an opioid are commonly recommended to manage breakthrough pain episodes.
How can breakthrough pain affect patients with cancer?	Patients with cancer-related breakthrough pain may: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Have increased anxiety and depression- Have difficulties getting a good night's sleep- Have increased number of doctor and emergency department visits

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