

Managing Acute Pain in the Community Setting: Red Flags Pharmacists Should Watch For



Acute Back Pain

Neurological Deficits/Cauda Equina Syndrome Indicators

- Presence of diffuse motor and/or sensory loss, such as:
 - weakness
 - loss of bladder or bowel function
 - “saddle anesthesia” sensory disturbance (numbness/loss of sensation in the buttock/genital area)

Fracture Concerns

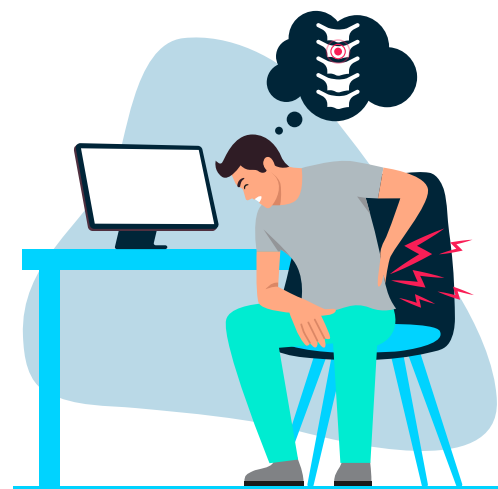
- Suspected fracture, especially following trauma, steroid use, or in individuals at risk of or living with osteoporosis

Infection-Related Red Flags

- Pain accompanied by signs of infection, such as fever and chills, tachycardia, warmth/inflammation with discharge at a surgical or injury site, etc.
- IV drug use predisposing to osteomyelitis risk

Malignancy-Related Concerns

- Pain accompanied by fever, drenching night sweats, and unintentional weight loss (sometimes referred to as ‘B symptoms’) which may indicate an underlying malignancy



Post-Dental Procedure Pain

Infection Warning Signs

- Excessive redness, swelling, or discharge from the extraction site, particularly if accompanied by fever and chills, indicating a potential infection.



Managing Acute Pain in the Community Setting: Resources for Pharmacists

Pharmacists play a crucial role in ensuring safe and effective management of acute pain. Here is a list of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines, resources and clinical studies covering various aspects of acute pain management, offering pharmacists a comprehensive foundation for informed decision-making.

Guidelines & Recommendations

1. ADA. Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Acute Dental Pain. [https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177\(23\)00390-2/fulltext](https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177(23)00390-2/fulltext) Accessed online December 13, 2023.
2. Qaseem et al. Noninvasive Treatments for Acute, Subacute, and Chronic Low Back Pain: A Clinical Practice Guideline From the American College of Physicians. *Ann Intern Med.* 2017; 166(7):514-530 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28192789/>
3. Bernstein et al. Low back pain and sciatica: summary of NICE guidance [published correction appears in *BMJ.* 2021 Jul 14;374:n1627]. *BMJ.* 2017;356:i6748. Published 2017 Jan 6. doi:10.1136/bmj.i6748
4. OPEN: Opioid Prescribing Engagement Network (2023). OPEN Prescribing Recommendations- Adult. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.56137/OPEN.000054>

Understanding Acute Pain

1. Raja et al. The revised International Association for the Study of Pain definition of pain: concepts, challenges, and compromises. *Pain.* 2020 Sep 1;161(9):1976-1982 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32694387/>
2. IASP. Acute Pain. <https://www.iasp-pain.org/resources/topics/acute-pain/> Accessed December 13, 2023

Cochrane Reviews, Systematic Reviews, Meta-Analyses, & RCTs

1. Miroshnychenko et al. Acute Postoperative Pain Due to Dental Extraction in the Adult Population: A Systematic Review and Network Meta-analysis. *J Dent Res.* 2023 Apr;102(4):391-401. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36631957/>
2. Jones et al. Opioid analgesia for acute low back pain and neck pain (the OPAL trial): a randomised placebo-controlled trial. *Lancet.* 2023 Jul 22;402(10398):304-312. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37392748/>
3. Williams et al. Efficacy of paracetamol for acute low-back pain: a double-blind, randomized controlled trial. *Lancet.* 2014; 384(9954), 1586-1596. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25064594/>
4. van der Gaag et al. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for acute low back pain. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 2020 Apr 16;4(4):CD013581. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32297973/>
5. Coxib and traditional NSAID Trialists' (CNT) Collaboration. Vascular and upper gastrointestinal effects of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs: meta-analyses of individual participant data from randomised trials. *Lancet.* 2013;382(9894):769-79. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23726390/>
6. McGettigan and Henry. Cardiovascular risk with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs: systematic review of population-based controlled observational studies. *PLoS Med.* 2011 Sep;8(9):e1001098. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21980265/>

