

Understanding Back Pain

Acute Versus Chronic Pain

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Back pain can be divided into general categories based upon the cause of the back pain and how long the pain lasts. The three primary classifications of pain are acute, subacute and chronic. Acute pain refers to pain which comes on rapidly and lasts anywhere from one to seven days.

Acute pain can range from mild to severe in intensity. It is the most common form of back pain. Subacute pain is defined as pain that generally lasts more than a week and as long as a few months.

Approximately ten to 20 percent of back and neck pain falls into the subacute category. Chronic pain refers to pain that lasts generally more than three months. It can also range from mild to severe in intensity. Persistent chronic pain is the least common form of back pain accounting for approximately five.