

## DURING AND AFTER TREATMENT

# Pain: Common Side Effect

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*For pain, standards of care are based on established evidence-based practice.*

## Definition

- Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with, or resembling that associated with, actual or potential tissue damage. Pain can be acute or chronic. Syndromes include neuropathic pain, chronic pain syndromes, arthralgias, skeletal pain, and gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and pelvic pain.

## Incidence

- Pain occurs in 59% of patients undergoing treatment and almost 100% of those with advanced disease.

## Assessment Tools and Recommended Intervals

- Perform a patient history.
- Assess pain on a scale of 1 (no pain) to 10 (worst pain).
- Perform a physical examination.

## Prevention Measures

- Avoid injury and the source of pain.

## Evidence-Based Interventions and Management

- Consider recommending the following:
  - Opioids
  - Adjuvant analgesics
  - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
  - Muscle relaxers
  - Topical analgesics
  - Antidepressants
  - Psychological and psychosocial treatment
  - Physical therapy
  - Acupressure or acupuncture
  - Hands-on treatment
  - Local treatment
  - Surgery
  - Other (e.g., pain management service, physical medicine and rehabilitation, mental health providers, oncology specialist [gynecology oncologist, oncology urologist], palliative care)

## Agents and Interventions to Avoid

- Avoid overprescribing and highly addictive medications. Prescribe at the lowest effective dose for the shortest time period.

- When prescribing pain medication, also prescribe treatment for constipation.
- When stopping opioids, slowly reduce the dose and timing to avoid withdrawal symptoms.

## Evidence-Based Resources for Providers

- *NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology: Survivorship* (v.3.2021) ([www.nccn.org/professionals/physician\\_gls/pdf/survivorship.pdf](http://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/pdf/survivorship.pdf))
- Oncology Nursing Society Putting Evidence Into Practice: Chronic pain ([www.ons.org/pep/chronic-pain](http://www.ons.org/pep/chronic-pain))

## Evidence-Based Resources for Patients and Family

- *NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Survivorship Care for Cancer-Related Late and Long-Term Effects* ([www.nccn.org/patients/guidelines/content/PDF/survivorship-crl-patient.pdf](http://www.nccn.org/patients/guidelines/content/PDF/survivorship-crl-patient.pdf))

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## KEYWORDS

cancer; symptoms; side effects; late effects; long-term side effects; survivorship care

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