



A flare up is when your pain is suddenly more intense than usual. Flare-ups are common, but temporary and can be managed.

Here are some things you can do to minimize flare-ups



When you have a flare-up plan, you can take control and have options to manage your pain.



How to reduce the chance of a flare-up

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> MANAGE STRESS

 - If you feel stressed or anxious, practice deep breathing, gentle yoga or meditation.
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> EAT WELL AND STAY HYDRATED

 - Eat healthy foods and avoid foods that can cause inflammation. Drink plenty of water.
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> GET GOOD SLEEP

 - Lack of sleep can make a pain flare-up worse. Getting enough sleep helps with pain and makes flare-ups less likely.
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> TAKE MEDICATION AS PRESCRIBED

 - Taking more or less medication can lead to a flare-up. Talk to your provider about medications you can take safely.
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> KEEP MOVING BUT PACE YOURSELF

 - If you stay active, but pace yourself, you can minimize the chances of overdoing it.

Create a flare-up plan


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> FILL OUT YOUR FLARE-UP PLAN

You can manage flare-ups better if you can plan ahead. Fill out your plan on page 3 to help AVOID flare-ups and to MANAGE the pain when you have a flare-up. Write down things like:

 - What activities can I do each day without overdoing it?
 - How well am I taking care of myself (showering, dressing, brushing my teeth)?
 - What positive things can I say to myself when I am not feeling well?

Take notes during a flare-up


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> MY FLARE-UP NOTES

Taking notes during a flare-up helps you learn more about your pain. The flare-up notes sheet on page 4 can help. Write down things like:

 - What may have been the trigger?
 - What can I do better next time?
 - What else was stressful at the time?

Create a flare-up kit

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> BUILD YOUR OWN, PERSONAL FLARE-UP KIT

Include things you enjoy. Here are some examples:

 - Books and magazines
 - Heating pads and ice packs
 - Playing cards
 - Lists of movies and music
 - Art and crafts supplies
 - Phone apps for relaxation, mindfulness, and gentle stretching
 - Photo books
 - Gift cards to movies or restaurants
 - People you can call for support
 - Cards from friends and family
 - Treats or snacks
 - Greeting cards to write



MY FLARE-UP PLAN

Flare-ups happen! Write down what works for you before a flare-up happens. It will help you manage flare-ups in the future.

What are my triggers and how can I avoid them? _____

What in my life is causing stress and how can I manage it better?

How well am I taking care of myself (showering, dressing, brushing my teeth)?

How can I improve my sleep? _____

How can I eat better and make sure I'm drinking enough water? _____

Which relaxation techniques can I use (deep breathing, meditation)?

What positive things can I say to myself when I am not feeling well? _____

What activities can I do each day without overdoing it? _____

Who do I go to for support from family and friends? _____

What other things can I do to feel better? _____

Find more ways to help with your pain:
www.northwestpainguidance.org/paineducationtoolkit



FLARE-UPS



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NOTES DURING A FLARE UP

Take notes to learn from each flare-up.
Share these notes with your provider.

DAY _____

TIME _____

Pain INTENSITY

Interferes with my ACTIVITIES

Interferes with ENJOYING LIFE

Rate from
0 – 10

What triggered my flare-up? _____

My flare-up pain descriptions (ex. sharp, burning, tingling, etc.)

Location: _____ Type of pain: _____

Location: _____ Type of pain: _____

Location: _____ Type of pain: _____

What was I doing shortly before my flare-up? _____

What was my mood before the flare-up? _____

What else was causing me stress before the flare-up? _____

Did I over-do something? How can I avoid this in the future? _____

What did I eat in the last 4 hours and did I drink enough water? _____

Was there a change in my medication or treatment? _____

What helped with this flare-up and what can I do better next time? _____

How did I reward myself when the flare-up was over? _____