

Sample Topic

## Back Pain



# *The Medical Disability Advisor: Workplace Guidelines for Disability Duration*

Fifth Edition

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Editor-in-Chief

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## Back Pain

### Related Terms

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- Backache

### Medical Codes

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- ICD-9-CM: 724, 724.1, 724.2, 724.5
- ICD-10: M54, M54.5, M54.6, M54.8, M54.9

### Definition

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Backache or back pain is a common symptom and affects up to 80% of individuals in their lifetime. In most cases (85%), there is no clear diagnosis or anatomic finding to account for the pain. In a limited number of cases, the symptoms of back pain may be related to a harmful condition such as a tumor or a fracture. Back pain is frequently attributed to degenerative changes in the spine, identified on imaging studies; however, there has been no clearly documented correlation between these nonspecific findings on imaging studies and the incidence of low back pain.

As many as 80% of all individuals with backache never have a clear understanding (diagnosis) of the underlying cause of the pain. For the 20% that receive a clear diagnosis, most are usually related to the spine and are of non life-threatening (benign) mechanical origins. However, spinal complaints may also involve disease such as tumor (rare); may be referred from the shoulder; hip, or internal organ; and, lastly, may represent physical manifestations of emotional disorder.

**Risk:** Risk factors that increase the likelihood of back pain include aging, previous back injury, physically demanding occupations, pregnancy, smoking, a sedentary lifestyle, obesity, poor posture, sports that involve twisting the back, bone or joint disease, and infectious disease.

**Incidence and Prevalence:** Overall, 4 out of 5 people (80%) will experience nonspecific back pain during their lifetime (“Nonspecific”). Nearly half will have at least one recurrence (Fraser). The incidence of back pain is highest for those aged 30 to 50.

See Low Back Pain.

### Cited References

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Fraser, William R. “Back Pain.” *eMedicine Consumer Health*. Eds. Scott Plantz, Francisco Talavera, and Anthony Anker. 3 Jan. 2005. eMedicine.com, Inc. 25 Jan. 2005 <<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/articles/4563-1.asp>>.

“Nonspecific Back Pain.” *MedlinePlus*. 3 Aug. 2005. National Library of Medicine. 25 Jan. 2005 <<http://medlineplus.gov/>>.