
My Pain Panic Plan

Use this plan for serious breakout pain not controlled by the usual interventions. This plan should be collaboratively developed with your physician and shared with anyone who might be caring for you. Having this preset plan decreases anxiety and minimizes unnecessary trips to the emergency room.

1. Medications (all changes should be discussed with your doctor)

When pain grows out of control and nothing seems to work, it often helps to increase the dose of a current medication and/or add in another as-needed medication. Based on your doctor's advice, list the following changes that can be safely made.

Changes in frequency or dosages to existing medications:

New medications to add in as needed:

2. Non-medication options

In addition to medication changes, it helps to have a premade list of nonpharmacologic interventions that can help with breakthrough pain or the panic that often accompanies serious changes in pain. For example, you might list the phone numbers of friends or family who can come over to sit with you until the crisis passes. You might also list breathing exercises, prayer, massage, heat, or other interventions that have provided relief in the past.

List the top interventions that might help with the pain or your distress:

3. Call your doctor's office or answering service to report the pain crisis

Ask your doctor when you should call her office to report a change in pain. Whether or not your pain needs urgent medical attention depends on the type and cause of pain that you are having. If you are unsure, call your doctor. Be sure to call the doctor who manages your pain.

My doctor's number is: _____

4. Find a way to get to the nearest emergency room

If your pain fits the description for what your doctor has defined as an emergency (e.g., crushing chest pains that run down your arm), call 911 or find a way to get to the nearest emergency room.

The nearest emergency room is: _____