

## River Cities Interventional Pain Specialists

Since 2004 Dr. Randall P. Brewer has been in clinical private practice in Shreveport, Louisiana and maintains academic appointments at Duke University and Louisiana State University, where he routinely lectures in the areas of Pain Medicine and clinical Neuroscience in the Department of Neurology and the Medical school. He is board certified by the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the American Board of Pain Medicine, and the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Dr. Brewer and his multi-disciplinary team of highly skilled nurses and physician extenders provide comprehensive pain management treatment solutions to treat chronic pain disorders. The team works collaboratively with patients and area providers to develop individualized treatment plans and attainable goals. . These strategies help patients to effectively address a wide range of chronic pain disorders.

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## TOP TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT...



# ACUTE LOW BACK PAIN

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### 1. What is “acute” low back pain?

Acute low back pain is back pain that begins suddenly. It may occur with or without a specific, accident or trauma. Sometimes

people with daily or frequent low back pain (chronic low back pain) also occasionally experience acute low back pain.



### 2. What causes acute low back pain?

In most cases, the cause of an episode of acute low back pain is not known. Muscle and ligament strains are potential causes. It is believed that a number of episodes may be caused by degenerative changes in the “discs” in the lumbar back. The acute pain occurs when the discs “bulge” or “herniate.” This causes inflammation and may cause pressure on sensitive nerves.

### 3. Should I rest when my back goes out?

Generally speaking, resting for more than 1 to 2 days should be avoided during an episode of low back pain. Clinical studies have determined that people who resume moderate activity tend to recover quicker from acute back pain episodes.

### 4. What signs or symptoms would indicate that I need to get immediate medical attention for LBP?

Weakness in the leg or foot, increasing loss of feeling in your leg or foot, or difficulty with urinating or having bowel movements are symptoms that should alert you to seek medical attention immediately.

### 5. When my back goes out, how long should I wait until I see the doctor?

As long as you are not developing the symptoms above, you should not rest for more than 1 or 2 days. Your back pain may seem to be getting worse as you gradually get back to your normal activities over the first 3 days. If you are not experiencing any relief of your symptoms after 3 to 4 days, or your back pain is severe, you should call your doctor for further instructions.

### 6. How do I treat acute low back pain?

The most important thing to do during an episode of acute low back pain is to try to resume normal activities as soon as possible. Ice, and sometimes heat, can help your back feel better. Many people get relief from acetaminophen (Tylenol) or antiinflammatories (such as ibuprofen) that are available without a prescription.

### 7. What if local treatments (ice, heat) or over-the-counter medications do not work?

You should consult your physician if these simple treatments are not improving your back pain. Remember, your pain will take a few days to subside and patience is very important. If your pain is particularly severe, your physician will likely need you to come in for an office visit to thoroughly evaluate your pain.

### 8. I have chronic low back pain, and I take hydrocodone (Norco) once or twice per day. Now, I am having acute low back pain. Should I take more medication?

Since you are on medication for chronic low back pain, you should notify your physician if you feel as though you need to take extra medication. It is very important to not “self-medicate” with prescription pain medications.

### 9. Are there any injections that may be useful?

Many people with acute low back pain choose to have their flare-up treated with an injection. Trigger point injections involve the injection of medication (local anesthetic and steroid) directly into painful muscles. Joint injections (facet joint injections) involve the injection of medications directly into and around painful, inflamed joints in the low back. Nerve blocks and epidural steroids are used to treat pain in the back that is also going down into the leg.

### 10. My back is feeling better, when can I go back to my normal activities?

Once your back pain has mostly gone away, you should already be able to resume most of your normal activities. Ask your doctor about specific instructions related to lifting as it may apply to your specific situation. Generally speaking, most people with a flare-up of low back pain that is successfully treated are able to resume their normal activities within 1 to 2 weeks.