

Causes, Symptoms, Treatment and Lifestyle Changes

Lower Back and Lumbar Pain



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What causes low back pain?

- Diseases
- Behaviors



Low Back Pain Causes

Common Diseases:

- Trauma (fall, accident)
- Sports injury
- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Disc issues
(herniated/bulging)
- Disc degeneration
- Skeletal abnormality
- Fibromyalgia
- Scoliosis

Common lifestyle causes:

- Overweight or weight gain
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Smoking
- Pregnancy
- Stress
- Improper posture
- Poor sleep patterns or lack of rejuvenating sleep
- Depression
- Overexertion or overexercise

Symptoms of low back/lumbar pain

- Stabbing sensation
- An ache that doesn't let up
- Radiating pain up or down the leg. This is usually referred to as sciatica.
- Problems with bladder and bowel control.
- Limited movement and mobility.
- Decreased ability to sit or stand for any extended period.
- Inability to transfer from standing to sitting or lying down to sitting.

How to treat low back pain

Treatment for low back pain is multi-faceted and may include:

- Pain Management Medications can include over the counter pain relievers as well as stronger medications like anti-convulsives, anti-depressants and opioids. Our health care team closely monitors all pain relief medications, as some of them can be habit-forming and may lead to other symptoms over time, particularly depression.
- Injections of medications such as corticosteroid or local anesthetic create nerve blocks that can reduce pain.
- Pain Psychology and Social Work services can help deal with the accompanying depression and anxiety that often accompany pain and can also be useful in dealing with stressful life situations that can contribute to pain.
- Physical Therapy to build strength and endurance as well as increasing flexibility and stability.
- Massage Therapy is a gentle method to manipulate muscles in a way that offers relief and relaxation.
- Acupuncture can be a very effective treatment tool.
- Chiropractic Care, utilizing manipulation and other tools is often quite effective in reducing pain and improving function quickly and non-invasively.
- Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) consist of electrodes placed on the skin near the painful areas that deliver tiny electrical impulses.

What can you do at home to improve your back pain?

- Maintain an ideal body weight. If you are overweight, talk to us about losing weight.
- Exercise every day. Even a slow walk or gentle stretching is important to maintain blood flow, flexibility and strength.
- Get enough sleep, but only at night. Although an occasional nap is OK, spending too much time in bed worsens lower back pain.
- Stop smoking today!