

Other advice:

Work—Research has shown that a return to work can have a positive effect on back pain.

Medication has an important role in enabling you to stay active during severe bouts of back pain. Your local pharmacist should be able to advise you. If your symptoms persist longer than 1 week you should also liaise with your GP.

Exercise - Movement and gentle exercise can help back pain. Some basic exercises are outlined below. Perhaps try up to 5 of each 3 times a day to help minimise stiffness which can also contribute to low back pain .



Further advice/treatment:

Re-attendance at your Emergency Department is recommended if ANY of the following are noted;

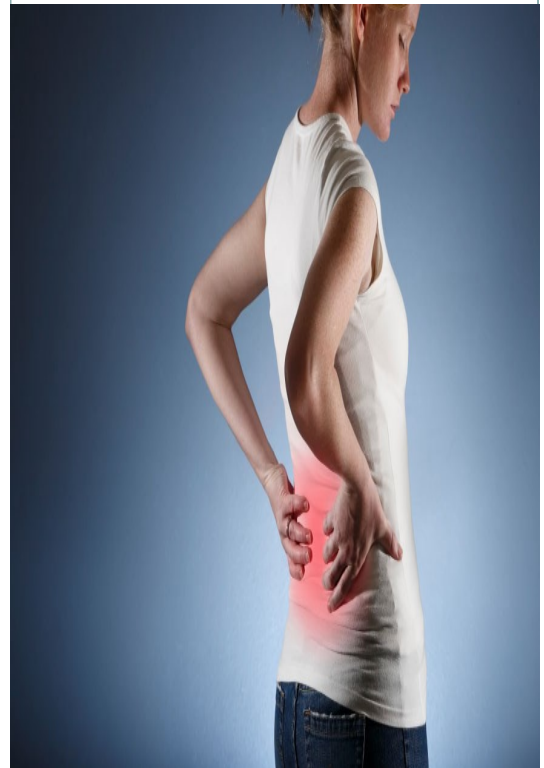
- If you notice recent difficulties passing or controlling the flow of urine.
- If you notice recent episodes of loss of bowel control.
- If you notice a change in sensation around your back passage or genitals.
- If you notice a recent change in erectile function.
- If you notice numbness or pins or needles in both legs.
- If you notice recent unsteadiness.
- If you are feeling unwell with worsening back pain.
- If your pain is not improving after 1 week, after trying some of the self management advice included, you should liaise with your GP.
- For further advice you can also liaise with a chartered Physiotherapist.

Other Information Resources

- Arthritis Research UK “Back Pain” - Pamphlet
- NICE Low Back Pain Guidelines 2016
- “The Back Book” www.tso.co.uk
- “The Truth about Back” Pain online video
- <http://www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/Backstretches.aspx>

Back Pain

An Information guide to assist your recovery



Types of Back Pain

Pain in the lower back or Lumbar Spine is common. The lower back is an area constantly under stress and occasionally this can cause pain.

Acute Back Pain - sudden onset and often a result of pushing, pulling or lifting. These activities are normally good for the spine, however too much, or involving too heavy a weight, can sometimes cause pain. This is our body's way of letting us know something is wrong and protecting us against further injury. Symptoms usually improve after 1 week but can take longer to completely settle.

Long term Back Pain—this is back pain lasting more than 3 months. This is not usually a sign of ongoing damage. This can develop when acute pain hasn't been controlled. It can also develop or occur when normal activities and movements have been avoided, often as a result of fear of re-injury and over-protection. This tends to improve with increases in activity.

Sciatica—Low back pain can sometimes cause leg pain. One possible cause of this can be irritation of nerves in the spine.

Facts about Back Pain

Your spine is one of the strongest parts of your body and structural damage is uncommon.

Back pain rarely indicates serious problems or damage.

Movement will help your back recover from injury.

Physical fitness can reduce the risk of low back pain and also assist recovery. Some forms of exercise to consider are walking, swimming and cycling.

Smokers are more likely to have long term issues with back pain.

Trying to remain active, remaining positive and getting on with everyday life also assists recovery.

Back Pain Advice

Sitting—prolonged periods of sitting (and driving) can worsen back pain. Try to avoid sitting for more than 20 minutes. If possible try to sit in a supportive chair or simply place a small pillow or rolled-up towel into the low back area to assist sitting posture.

Smoking—try to reduce or stop to decrease the risk of long term back pain.

Weight—try to maintain a healthy weight, this can reduce the stress on the back.

Sleeping can often be difficult during periods of back pain. Some useful positions are side lying with knees and hips bent and a pillow between knees or on back with a pillow under knees or on front with a pillow under waist.

Lifting—avoid heavy lifting during acute flare ups and try to adopt good lifting techniques, i.e. allowing knees to bend and lifting close to your body.

Heat/Cold—Some people find relief from heat e.g. a warm shower, while others find benefit from ice packs wrapped in a damp towel for 10 minutes.