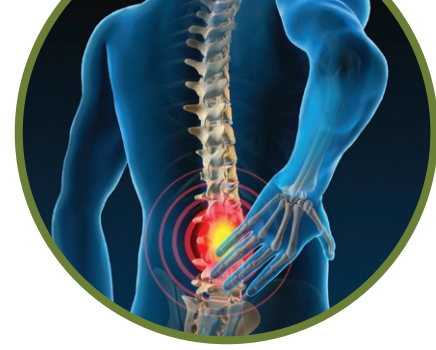


Protecting Your Back (and Your Budget)



Nagging lower back pain is bad enough without being a pain in your wallet. Consider that Americans spend an estimated \$50 billion annually in seeking treatment solutions to their back pain.*

Low back pain is a leading cause of disability and a major factor behind work absenteeism. Most people will experience low back pain at least once during their lives, and fortunately, most people recover from back pain without intervention.

6 Tips to Help Prevent Low Back Pain

The kind of back pain that follows heavy lifting or exercising too hard is often caused by muscle strain. To minimize back pain and help keep it from becoming a serious — and more costly — issue, consider putting the following prevention tips into practice:

- 1. Reduce the load you carry.** Weed out excess items in your purse or wallet to keep it as light as possible or downsize to a smaller bag. This goes for overloaded backpacks for children, too.
- 2. Carry items close to your body.** Rather than letting purses or bags dangle from your arms, keep those items tucked in and close to your body so that your frame helps to absorb the weight.
- 3. Avoid sitting for long periods.** Sitting can worsen back pain and lead to other health issues, too. If you have

Who's At Risk?

Low back pain can occur at any age; however, the odds of ongoing back pain increase as you get older. Other factors that may increase your risk of experiencing low back pain:

- Being overweight
- Having an inactive lifestyle
- Having a job that requires heavy lifting

a desk job, try to get up every hour or so for a quick walk. Also watch your posture when seated. Poor posture can contribute to back pain.

- 4. Build your core strength.** Following a fitness program that includes exercises for building core strength will help develop your abdominal and back muscles. Improving core strength can protect your lower back.
- 5. Lose weight.** Carrying extra pounds on your frame may aggravate your lower back, especially if your core muscles aren't strong. Consider shedding some weight to boost your overall health.
- 6. Space activities throughout the week.** If you tend to do most of your physical work on the weekend — whether

projects around the home or yard or weekend warrior sporting activities — try spacing things out so you're not doing everything in one or two days. That way, you may avoid overuse or a muscle pull.

When to Get Medical Attention

"It's important to remember that back pain isn't a condition but rather a symptom of an underlying issue. If your back pain persists more than a few days, see your primary care doctor," says **Jared Williams, MD**, Family Medicine. For uncomplicated cases, conservative care is usually the place to start. That could include rest, anti-inflammatory pain relievers, and applying heat or ice. Physical therapy may be recommended for pain relief treatments and improving core strength. If a more serious or chronic underlying condition is suspected, your doctor may refer you to an orthopedic specialist for further evaluation and testing.

When back pain is directly related to an injury, accident or fall, or is associated with bladder or bowel problems, abdominal pain or fever, seek immediate medical attention.

* Source: Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases.

Confused About Medicare?

Are you or a loved one turning 65? Are you confused about your future health care options?

Join Greater Newport Physicians for an informative discussion and learn about Original Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Prescription Drug Plans, and Medigap plans for Medicare beneficiaries in Orange County and Long Beach.

GNP hosts these informational events presented by Nautilus Health Insurance Services. Call today to reserve your seat.

Medicare 101 events are held at Hoag Hospital, Orange Coast Memorial, Saddleback Memorial, and Long Beach Memorial.

This event is for educational purposes only, and no plan-specific benefits or details will be shared. Reservations are required. Call or register online today to reserve your seat.



Please call **(866) 901-9356** for dates and locations of upcoming meetings, or register online at www.gnpweb.com/register.