

LOW BACK PAIN

Low back pain can relate to problems with the lumbar spine, the discs between the vertebrae, the ligaments around the spine and disc, the spinal cord and nerves, muscles of the low back, internal organs, hips and abdomen or the skin covering the lumbar area.

Instructions:

1. During the first 24 hours, apply ice packs to your back for 10 to 20 minutes 3 to 4 times a day. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin.
2. After 24 hours, apply heat to your back with a heating pad set on low or a warm water bottle for 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours. A gentle massage and warm showers may also be helpful.
3. Begin normal activities as you can tolerate without causing pain.
4. Bend at the hips and knees to lift objects; never bend from the waist only.
5. Sleep on a firm mattress. Sleep with a pillow under your knees or sleep on your side with the knees bent.
6. Wear low-heeled shoes.
7. If you are overweight, losing weight will help prevent back pain.
8. Begin a program of back exercises to prevent future episodes of pain. Walking, swimming, and cycling are good exercises. Avoid exercises that put stress on the back, such as rowing and jogging.

See a doctor if:

1. You have shooting pains into your buttocks, groin, or legs.

Visit an Emergency Department if:

1. You have difficulty urinating or lose control of urination or passing motion.
2. You have numbness or weakness in your legs or feet.
3. You have abdominal pain and have fainted.