

I have low back pain, what should I do?

Signature Health has an Answer for You



Have low back pain? Most of us will have some form of back pain in our lifetimes. The good news is that for 80% of us, the back pain will decline within 6-8 weeks without any surgery.

So what causes back pain? Well, most of the time, we simply neglect our backs in our daily routines. We use poor body mechanics (ways of moving), have poor posture, carry a few too many extra pounds, and neglect exercise. All of these places unwanted strain on the back and sets us up for injuries to the muscles, ligaments and discs of our lower back. Other reasons for back pain are injuries, curvatures of the back and arthritis.

How can I prevent back pain?

You may not be able to prevent back pain entirely, but you can reduce your risk of back pain by learning good body mechanics (the way you move):

Lifting/Reaching

- Bend at the knees and lift with your leg muscles keeping the objects close to your body and only chest high
- As you reach for objects, tighten stomach muscles to support your back
- Use the muscles in your arms and legs to reach and lift -- not your back muscles

In Your Car

- Wear your seatbelt and adjust the seat so your knees are at or just below hip level
- Sit upright with both hands on the wheel and shift your weight frequently

Standing/Sitting/Sleeping

- Change positions while you stand by shifting
- Bend knees slightly or prop on foot up on a low stool while you stand
- Sit in chairs that support your back and sit firmly against the back of the chair with your knees level with your hips and your feet flat on the floor
- Sleep on a mattress that supports the natural curves of your spine
- Sleep on your side with your knees bent and a pillow between them
- If you lie on your back, sleep with a pillow under your knees

Maintain a Health Weight

- Lose weight to reduce the stress on your back
- Talk to a dietitian or physician to help you find a program to lose weight
- Always consult your physician before beginning any new diet program

Follow a Back Exercise Program

- Exercise your "core" muscles (stomach, back and hips muscles) which will improve posture and strengthen your back
- Always consult your physician before beginning any new exercise program, especially if you are experiencing any pain

It is important to see an orthopedic physician if there has been an injury of any kind, the pain is severe, if it travels down your leg, or if you have numbness or tingling in your leg.

