

Back Pain

Lower back pain is an extremely common symptom for many individuals. Although back pain is very common, it is unlikely that it is caused by serious damage and typically it will get better on its own.

What causes back pain?

- A very common cause of back pain is a strain, where a muscle in the back is pulled.
 - This can be caused in many different ways, such as picking up heavy objects
- Other causes can be a slipped disc, trapped nerve (sciatica) or inflammation of the spine.
- Back pain can sometimes be caused by very serious issues like broken bones or cancers, however this is very rare.

What are the signs and symptoms of back pain?

Common symptoms:

- Non-specific pain: not always possible to diagnose the exact cause.

Sciatica:

- Inflammation
- Pain
- Sometimes numbness in the affected leg.

Serious signs (**ALERT GP IMMEDIATELY**)

- Difficulty passing urine
- Inability to control bladder
- Numbness/tingling around genitals area
- Impaired sexual function
- History of back trauma

Treating back pain

Stay Active:

- As much as the pain will allow
- Try to move freely and normally
- Start small and slowly increase the amount of exercise.

Pain Relief:

- Painkillers such as ibuprofen can help to alleviate the pain initially.
- Can help you to stay active.

Heat or Ice:

- You can use heat, such as hot water bottles, to help reduce the pain.
- Ice packs, such as frozen bags of peas, can also reduce pain when applied

Lifestyle Changes:

- Back pain can be caused by poor posture or continuously bending over, for example to look at your phone.

- You could attempt to improve posture when sitting and/or standing to that you have a straighter back.
- You could also attempt to reduce the amount of time bent over too look at your phone.

References

- https://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/AE_BPA_01.pdf
- <https://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/publication/download/low-back-pain-advice-leaflet-v7>