Back Pain

Back pain is common. It can be the result of a muscle pull or strain. It can also come from changes in the bones and nerves in the spine. These changes can come from an injury or from calcium loss in your bones (*osteoporosis*).

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HOME CARE

- Listen to your doctor about how active you should be. Back pain can get worse with activity that is not approved by your doctor.
- Avoid sports with sudden movements.
- Ask your doctor for a list of exercises to make your back muscles stronger.
- Learn how to lift or move things safely to protect your back.
- Sit up straight.
- Sometimes, using ice for 15 to 20 minutes, 4 times per day can help the pain.
  - Put ice in a plastic bag.
  - Place a towel between the skin and the bag.
- Sometimes heat or a hot shower will help the pain, especially if it is from a muscle cramp.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You have numbness, tingling, weakness, or problems with the use of your arms or legs.
- You get very bad back pain that does not go away with medicine.
- You cannot control when you poop (*bowel movement*) or pee (*urinate*).
- You have increasing pain in any area of the body. This includes your belly (*abdomen*).
- You are short of breath, dizzy, or feel faint.
- You feel sick to your stomach (*nauseous*), throw up (*vomit*), or get sweaty.
- You notice your toes, legs, or feet change color or get cold.
- You have been injured and your back hurts.
- Your back pain gets worse.
- You have a temperature by mouth above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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