Back Pain & Injury

Your back pain is most likely caused by a strain of the muscles or ligaments supporting the spine. Back strains cause pain and trouble moving because of muscle spasms. They may take several weeks to heal. Usually they are better in days.

Treatment for back pain includes:

- **Rest -** Get bed rest as needed over the next day or two. Use a firm mattress and lie on your side with your knees slightly bent. If you lie on your back, put a pillow under your knees.
- **Early movement -** Back pain improves most rapidly if you remain active. It is much more stressful on the back to sit or stand in one place. Do not sit, drive or stand in one place for more than 30 minutes at a time. Take short walks on level surfaces as soon as pain allows.
- **Limit bending and lifting -** Do not bend over or lift anything over 20 pounds until instructed otherwise. Lift by bending your knees. Use your leg muscles to help. Keep the load close to your body and avoid twisting. Do not reach or do overhead work.
- **Medicines -** Medicine to reduce pain and inflammation are helpful. Muscle-relaxing drugs may be prescribed.
- **Therapy -** Put ice packs on your back every few hours for the first 2-3 days after your injury or as instructed. After that ice or heat may be alternated to reduce pain and spasm. Back exercises and gentle massage may be of some benefit. You should be examined again if your back pain is not better in one week.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have pain that radiates from your back into your legs.
- You develop new bowel or bladder control problems.
- You have unusual weakness or numbness in your arms or legs.
- You develop nausea or vomiting.
- You develop abdominal pain.
- You feel faint.

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