



Low Back Pain

Lower back pain is likely to affect you at some time in your life, as 80% of the population has or will have low back pain. It is one of the most common causes of time lost at work and visits to the medical doctor. Most people have heard that lower back pain will feel better in 6 to 10 weeks.

If it goes away on its own anyway why should I get it treated?

The first point is that the idea that low back pain goes away on its own with time is likely not true, or a least less common than generally thought – recent studies have shown that many people, who doctors have assumed to have gotten better are in fact still suffering with low back pain one year later and have simply slipped out of the system. Because the doctor no longer hears from the person with low back pain they have assumed that they have recovered.

Just because the pain is gone doesn't mean the problem is gone. Pain is often one of the last things we feel in our backs when something is not performing properly. One of the biggest predictors of future lower back pain is previous low back pain, which means that even though the pain has gone away the underlying problem, has not. Pain is not the problem just like the oil light in your car is not the problem. Pain is just the signal much like your oil light that there is some underlying problem. If these problems are not taken care of or if the signal is muted by medication then these underlying problems can linger and cause even more severe problems – problems that are harder to fix – later on down the line.

The greatest predictor of injury is previous injury. This means that if you have low back pain at some point then you are likely to have it happen again. If you do not seek treatment for an injury you are at increased risk of that injury happening or popping up again. Other research has shown that the body will compensate after an injury to take the pressure off an affected area. This may lead to decreased pain in the injured area even if the issue has not actually resolved. Long-term compensation for an unresolved injury or issue will lead to problems down the road that are much more difficult to deal with. That is why it is important to seek treatment after an injury to make sure that the body is not compensating and the injury is fully resolved.

Proper treatment has been shown to decrease the time that you have to deal with the pain and decrease the chances of recurrence or severity of the next issue. This treatment will likely constitute manual adjustive therapy and exercises that aim to strengthen weak muscles and stretch tight muscles. Other treatments such as ultrasound, electrical muscle stimulation, laser or kinesiotaping, may be used depending on the circumstances.

When to contact your doctor:

- Low back pain that is accompanied by changes in bowel or bladder changes where there is loss of control of function (cannot go to the bathroom or are unable to hold off on going to the bathroom) this may be a sign of a potentially life threatening condition known as Cauda Equina syndrome – seek medical attention immediately
- Sudden onset of back pain after a fall or some sort of trauma
- Low back pain that is accompanied with unexplained fevers

95% of low back pain is of a non-serious nature and can be treated effectively by a Chiropractor. A Chiropractor is also trained to know when you need a referral in the event that your condition requires medical attention. If you have any questions about your back visit your Chiropractor to see if they can help you.