

FAST FACTS: Low Back Pain

The lower back region consists of five bones called vertebrae. This area of the back (spine) is the source of most movement and flexibility and is the support for much of a person's body weight.

There are many possible causes of Low Back Pain. The spine ages along with the rest of the body and can result in shrinking of the discs (shock-absorbing structures), which allows vertebrae to rub against each other, causing pain.

✓ Possible Causes of Low Back Pain

- Strain/sprain of back muscles and soft tissue
- Increased movement of the vertebrae
- Degenerative disc disease
- Spinal Stenosis: pressure on the spinal nerves
- Sciatica-pain in the right or left sciatic nerves
- Scoliosis: "S" curve of the spine can be mild to severe
- Osteoarthritis-breakdown of the cartilage that cushions the joints
- Rheumatoid Arthritis: disease that causes inflammation of the tissues
- Herniated disc: tear in the spine that allows bulging of the disc
- Vertebral fracture: common in older adults, especially older women



✓ What Medical Professionals Assess

- Characteristics of the pain such as when it started, the location of the pain, the effect of position change, etc.
- What may have caused the pain and factors that impact the pain

✓ Possible Interventions

- Medications: non-opioid and opioid
- Non-Drug Treatments
 - Heat or Cold
 - Position change
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Massage
 - Distraction such as, reading, TV, music, pray, other activities, etc.

✓ **What You Can Do**

- Write down and share information about your pain with your provider.
- Consider using a [Pain Diary](#) to note important information useful to the provider.
- Try a non-drug treatment to decrease your pain, be sure to note on your Pain Diary the impact of the treatment on your pain.

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