

## 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. The spine ages along with the rest of the body and can result in shrinking of the discs (spongy pads), which allows vertebrae to rub against each other and cause 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, a disease that causes inflammation of the tissues
- Herniated disc which is a tear in the spine that allows bulging of the disc
- Vertebral fracture which is common in older adults, especially older women



### ✓ What Healthcare Professionals Assess

- Characteristics of the pain such as when it started, the location of the pain, the effect of position change.
- 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, prayer, other activities

### ✓ What Else You Should Do

- Write down and share information about your loved one's pain with their healthcare provider.
- Use a [Pain Diary](#) to note important information useful to the healthcare provider.
- Encourage your loved one to try a non-drug treatment and document the impact on their pain in their Pain Diary.

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## References

WebMD. January 25, 2022. *What is Low Back Pain*. <https://www.webmd.com/back-pain/ss/slideshow-low-back-pain-overview>.

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NIH). November 15, 2021. *Low Back Pain Fact Sheet*. <https://www.webmd.com/back-pain/ss/slideshow-low-back-pain-overview>.

Mayo Clinic. August 21, 2020. *Back Pain*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/back-pain/symptoms-causes/syc-20369906>.