



## Back Pain

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### What is back pain?

Back pain is aching or discomfort in and around the spine. Sometimes, the pain radiates to the arms and hands or to the legs and feet.

### Why is it significant?

Although it's rarely serious and seldom requires surgery, back pain can be excruciating. It can also affect your ability to do physical tasks and participate in recreational activities.

### What else should I be aware of?

In rare cases, back pain can be a symptom of arthritis, osteoporosis or an intra-abdominal cause. Let your doctor know if you have loss of bowel and bladder control, difficulty standing or walking, numbness in the buttocks/rectal/genital area, severe leg or back pain, dizziness when standing, fever or urinary problems.



## What can I do?

- ✓ Maintain proper posture.
- ✓ Ensure chairs and mattresses give you proper support.
- ✓ Stretch regularly, paying particular attention to your abdominal (core) and back muscles.
- ✓ Maintain a healthy body weight through regular physical activity and good nutrition.
- ✓ Learn to use proper lifting techniques.

- ✓ Contact the Canadian Back Institute at [www.cbi.ca](http://www.cbi.ca) for more tips on back care.
- ✓ Learn more about back pain by going to [www.makinghealthhappen.com](http://www.makinghealthhappen.com).



- ✓ If you strain your back, relax in a comfortable position and apply ice (a frozen bag of peas wrapped in a tea towel, for example) to the affected area for 10-15 minutes at frequent intervals. Avoid prolonged sitting or bed rest, as this can actually worsen your discomfort. After 24-48 hours, try applying heat to the area instead of ice.

## What can I take?

Over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen and ibuprofen can help ease back pain. You may also want to consider complementary therapies such as massage therapy, chiropractic, acupuncture and physiotherapy.



Go to [MakingHealthHappen.com](http://MakingHealthHappen.com) and enter **center1002** in the search box to learn more about Back Pain.