

The Spine Column

Issue 1, 2021

First Aid for Low Back Pain

Exercising and stretching help low back pain. Both can be done at home without equipment, either standing, sitting, or laying down. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist about which exercises or stretches are best for you.

Use these tips when your back aches:

Keep Moving

If you can, walk for 10 to 20 minutes at a time every 2 to 3 hours. Walk on level surfaces, not on hills or stairs. Walk quickly if you can and swing your arms as you walk.

Lying down for too long can make back pain worse. Sitting can make it worse too. Change positions every 30 minutes. If you must sit for long periods of time, take breaks. Get up and walk around, or lie flat to gently stretch your back.

When you do lie down, protect your back on the way down. And learn the sleeping positions that protect your back.

Ice and Heat

There is no rule about using heat or ice for back pain. You can try each to see which works best for you.

Medicine for Pain

Pain medicine may help you recover from low back pain by controlling pain during rest and activity.

Continued next page.

Contact Us

1-866-942-7966
Monday–Friday,
8:30 am–5:00 pm
TTY: 1-800-662-1220

We Value Your Opinion

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at mvplistsens.com.

All responses are 100% confidential and help create a better experience.

MVP Health Care offers a health management program for members living with chronic back pain. For more information or to see if you qualify, call **1-866-942-7966**. MVP's program is based on the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement's (ICSI) health care guidelines for the treatment of adult low back pain. This program must be coordinated with your physician.





For best results:

- Talk to your doctor
- Learn what the risks and side effects are before you take any pain medicine
- Follow the instructions on the medicine label, or from your doctor
- Don't take more than one kind of medicine unless your doctor has told you to

Ask your doctor if you can take over-the-counter pain medicine, such as ibuprofen and naproxen. Another option is acetaminophen (Tylenol, for example). Be safe with medicines.

Read and follow all instructions on the label. If you have been prescribed a muscle relaxant, carefully follow your doctor's advice.

Movement Tips

- When a movement hurts, go gently
- When moving into a lying-down position, keep your back straight
- Don't sit up to read or watch TV in bed. Use your bed only for lying down
- Sit on firm seating. Look for chairs with armrests for lowering and raising yourself
- When you first get up in the morning, wait 40 to 60 minutes before doing any vigorous exercises

Chronic Illness and Mental Health

Living with a chronic illness, like low back pain, may make you more likely to develop a mental health condition, such as depression. A new or ongoing diagnosis combined with a change to your routine and managing your treatment plan might be stressful or make you sad sometimes. However, if those feelings do not go away and impact your daily life, you may have depression. Some things to look out for:

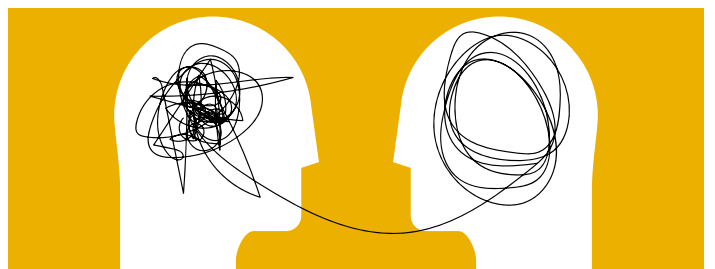
- Constant feelings of hopelessness, irritability, or sadness
- No longer enjoying things that you used to enjoy
- Loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, changes in weight

The good news is that depression is treatable when you are living with a chronic illness.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

Talk with your doctor if you think you are depressed. Make sure your doctor knows about your current treatment plan and medications that you take for low back pain.

You may also contact an MVP Case Manager at **1-866-942-7966** to discuss your condition and help prepare you to speak with your doctor.



Go online and **take charge of your health.**

The MVP Healthwise® Knowledgebase is your one-stop resource for the latest health information. Visit mvphealthcare.com and select *Members*, then *Health & Wellness*.

The Right Care. **Right Away.**

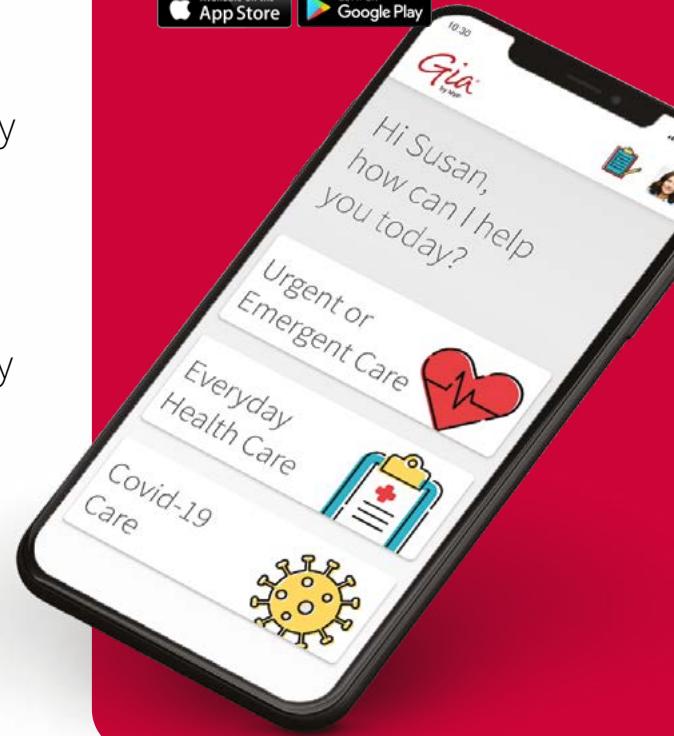
Start with GiaSM

Access online 24/7 urgent and emergency care services anytime, anywhere. Plus, Gia is your ultimate health care connection for everyday health needs such as screenings and tests, prescription refills, or help on any health care topic.

When you don't know what care you need, start with Gia! Gia can refer you to any of MVP's telemedicine services or, when necessary, in-person care from nearby doctors, specialists, labs, pharmacies, and more!

Telemedicine services from MVP Health Care are provided by UCM Digital Health, Amwell, and Physera at no cost-share for members. (Plan exceptions may apply.) Members' direct or digital provider visits may be subject to co-pay/cost-share per plan.

Download the **Gia by MVP** app and get started today!



Quick Tips for **Your Next Appointment**

Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results. Whether your appointment is in-person or virtual, here are some tips to help you and your doctor become better partners in improving your health care:

- Write down your questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get asked and answered
- Bring a "health history" list with you and keep it up to date
- Always bring any medications you are taking, including over-the-counter, or a list of those medications (include when and how often you take them) and what strength
- You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions and remember the answers

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Find more information and printable forms at mvphealthcare.com



LivingWell



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625 State Street
Schenectady, NY 12305-2111
mvphealthcare.com

Are you due for important health screenings?

Regular screenings are important to help maintain your overall health. For screenings that are appropriate for your age and sex, visit mvphealthcare.com/PreventiveCare and talk to your doctor.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice. If you have questions about your health, talk to your doctor.

Health benefit plans are issued or administered by MVP Health Plan, Inc.; MVP Health Insurance Company; MVP Select Care, Inc.; and MVP Health Services Corp., operating subsidiaries of MVP Health Care, Inc. Not all plans available in all states and counties.

Living Well Programs from MVP

MVP offers a variety of classes and workshops—both in-person and virtual—to help you live well physically, emotionally, and otherwise! Find classes like chair moves, tai chi, meditation, or even quitting tobacco. To find a class that is right for you, visit mvphealthcare.com/healthandwellness and select *View the Living Well Program Calendar*.

