

The Spine Column

A Special Newsletter for MVP Health Care[®] Members **Issue 2, 2023**

Protect Your Back with Proper Movement

The way you use your body is called body mechanics. Pay attention to how your body mechanics affect your back. When you lift, bend your knees and flex from your hips. Don't let your spine slump. If lifting makes your symptoms worse, try to not bend, lift, or reach.

Avoid or change movements that cause pain. For example:

- Use the upper rack of the dishwasher and “mid-height” cupboard shelves to avoid reaching and bending
- Walk or swim for exercise instead of jogging
- Rake leaves using the opposite arm from your usual side
- Perch on a high stool for kitchen or workbench tasks
- Put one foot on a low stool (and switch back and forth) if you must stand for a while
- Shower instead of bathing to avoid having to get in and out of a tub



Contact Us

1-866-942-7966

Monday–Friday,

8:30 am–5 pm

TTY 711

We Value Your Opinion

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at mvp-listens.com.

We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100% confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.

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.

Low Back Pain Myths

Here are some common myths about low back pain—and the facts:

Myth: I need to rest my back when I have back pain.

Fact: Safely staying active won't hurt you. It may help you get better faster. Plus, staying active may help protect your back from being injured again. Even short walks or light stretching will help.

Myth: I need prescription pain medicine.

Fact: It's best to try to let time and being active heal your back. Opioid pain medicines—such as hydrocodone or oxycodone—usually don't work any better than over-the-counter medicines like ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or naproxen. And opioids can cause serious problems like opioid use disorder or overdose. Moderate to severe opioid use disorder is sometimes called addiction. Talk to your doctor about medicines that might be right for you.

Myth: I need a test like an X-ray or an MRI to diagnose my low back pain.

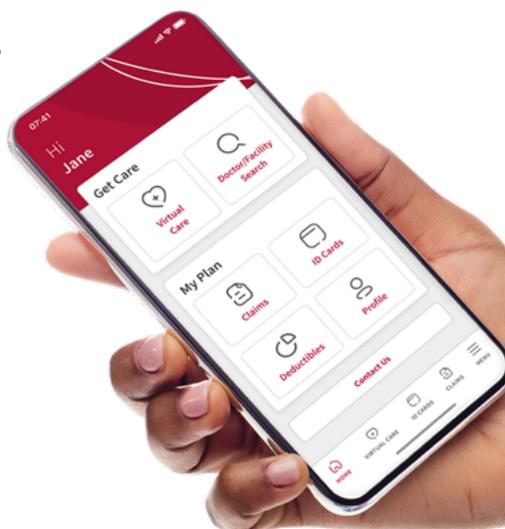
Fact: Getting a test right away could lead you down a treatment path you may not need, since most people get better on their own.

Myth: I need to stay in bed due to low back pain.

Fact: Bed rest for more than a couple of days can make your low back pain worse. It can lead to other problems such as stiff joints and muscle weakness. As soon as you can, ease back into your normal routine. If you must sit for long periods of time, take breaks. Get up and walk around or lie down for a few minutes.

Access to Care, When You Need It

For urgent medical needs or questions, the *Gia*® by MVP mobile app is here when you need it. *Gia* is available 24/7 and quickly connects you to a doctor via phone, in-app messaging, or video. *Gia* is a good option when you can't get to your doctor's office, do not have transportation, or cannot get time off work.



Scan the code with the camera on your mobile device, or visit **GoAskGia.com** to get the app.

Try *Gia* for flu, strep, ear and sinus infections, and more.



Movement in Focus: Wall Sit

Stretching the muscles in your back can help relieve pain and increase flexibility. This makes it easier for your muscles to keep your spine in a good, neutral position.

Start this exercise slowly. Ease off if you start to have pain.

1. Stand with your back 10 to 12 inches away from a wall
2. Lean into the wall until your back is flat against it
3. Pressing your lower back into the wall, slowly slide down until your knees are slightly bent
4. Hold for about six seconds
5. Slide back up the wall
6. Repeat eight to 12 times

Lower Your Risk of Influenza (Flu) and Pneumonia

It is important to get vaccinated against the flu each year, and pneumonia as directed by your doctor.

Pneumonia is a lung infection that can cause mild to severe illness in people of all ages. Signs of it include coughing, fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, rapid breathing or shortness of breath, chills, or chest pain. Many pneumonia-related deaths are preventable through vaccination and appropriate treatment.

Certain people are more likely to become ill with pneumonia:

- Adults age 65 or older
- Children younger than age five
- People under the age of 65 who have underlying medical conditions (like diabetes or HIV/AIDS)
- People ages 19–64 who smoke cigarettes
- People ages 19–64 who have asthma

Simple steps for preventing the flu and pneumonia:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Clean hard surfaces that are touched often (like doorknobs and countertops)
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue, your elbow, or sleeve
- Limit your exposure to cigarette smoke
- Take steps to treat, control, and prevent conditions like diabetes and HIV/AIDS

Get vaccinated.

Several vaccines prevent infections that can cause pneumonia, including pneumococcal, pertussis (whooping cough), and seasonal flu vaccines. Talk to your doctor for more information.

Have a Health Question?

Our Health Library is your one-stop resource for the latest health information. Visit mvphealthcare.com/HealthandWellness.



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Health and Wellness or Prevention Information

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Living Well Programs from MVP

The MVP Health Promotions team is proud to offer a variety of classes, discount programs, and vouchers throughout our service area. To learn more, find classes by you, or to register for any of our programs, check out mvphealthcare.com/calendar.

Stay a Step Ahead with Preventive Care

Preventive care helps you stay healthy by screening for illnesses early on when treatment is more effective. Talk to your doctor to find out if you are due for screenings or any other preventive care services.

