

The Spine Column

A Special Newsletter for
MVP Health Care[®] Members



Activity and Exercise

Low back pain can take a toll on your mental health. You may feel fear, frustration, and anger or have depression and anxiety because of ongoing pain. Those common reactions can make your pain last even longer. If pain is starting to get you down:

- Let people know when you need a helping hand. Ask family members or friends to help out with physical tasks you can't do right now.
- Be honest with your doctor about your pain. Ask for a referral to a counselor or pain management specialist. A prescription antidepressant or anti-anxiety medicine may also help with chronic pain.
- Work with your health professionals and your work supervisor to make a return-to-work plan, if needed. Ask for an ergonomic consultation if you need to learn how to do some of your job duties differently to avoid hurting your back again.

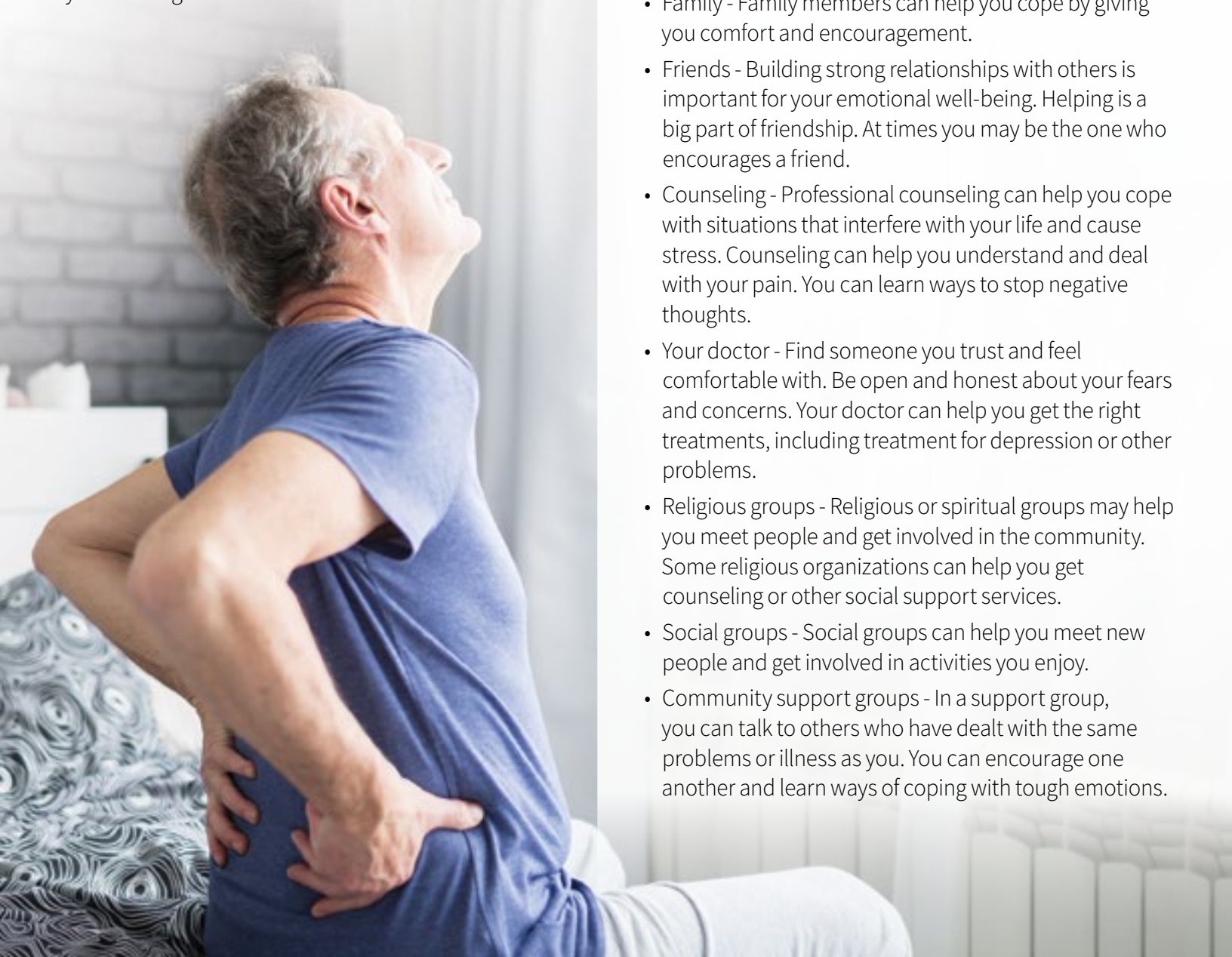
Emotional support is important

You may have to lean on friends and family when facing difficult situations caused by chronic pain or other problems. Your loved ones can play an important role in supporting your recovery. Your doctor and community also may give you extra support.

Asking for support from others is not always easy. It can be hard to tell someone about your problems. But don't be afraid to ask for help.

Where you can get support

- Family - Family members can help you cope by giving you comfort and encouragement.
- Friends - Building strong relationships with others is important for your emotional well-being. Helping is a big part of friendship. At times you may be the one who encourages a friend.
- Counseling - Professional counseling can help you cope with situations that interfere with your life and cause stress. Counseling can help you understand and deal with your pain. You can learn ways to stop negative thoughts.
- Your doctor - Find someone you trust and feel comfortable with. Be open and honest about your fears and concerns. Your doctor can help you get the right treatments, including treatment for depression or other problems.
- Religious groups - Religious or spiritual groups may help you meet people and get involved in the community. Some religious organizations can help you get counseling or other social support services.
- Social groups - Social groups can help you meet new people and get involved in activities you enjoy.
- Community support groups - In a support group, you can talk to others who have dealt with the same problems or illness as you. You can encourage one another and learn ways of coping with tough emotions.



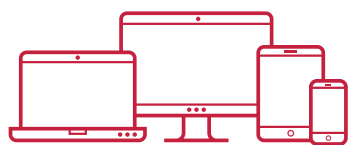
How friends and family can help

Your loved ones can offer support by:

- Giving encouragement. This can keep you from feeling hopeless or alone.
- Offering to help. Getting a helping hand can keep you from feeling overwhelmed. This may include helping with small daily tasks or bigger problems.
- Going to medical visits. Your loved ones can offer support by being involved in your medical care.
- Being honest and realistic. Make sure your loved ones understand how serious the problem is. They can help by not setting unreachable goals or by not acting like the problem will just go away.
- Respecting your wishes. You are responsible for your decisions. Your loved ones can offer support and encouragement without interfering with your major decisions.

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Make informed decisions about your health by using the Healthwise® Knowledgebase—our

online Health Encyclopedia. Curious about the medications you take every day? Visit mvphealthcare.com and select *Members*, then *Health & Wellness*. The MVP Healthwise Knowledgebase is your one-stop resource for the latest health information.

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.

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

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Quick Tips for Being Prepared to Talk to Your Doctor

Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results. 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.
- Find more information and printable forms at mvphealthcare.com.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)



Contact Us

For more information, call

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. 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.

Reduce Your Risk of the Flu and Pneumonia

It is important to get vaccinated against the flu and pneumonia. Many pneumonia-related deaths are preventable through vaccination and appropriate treatment. 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.

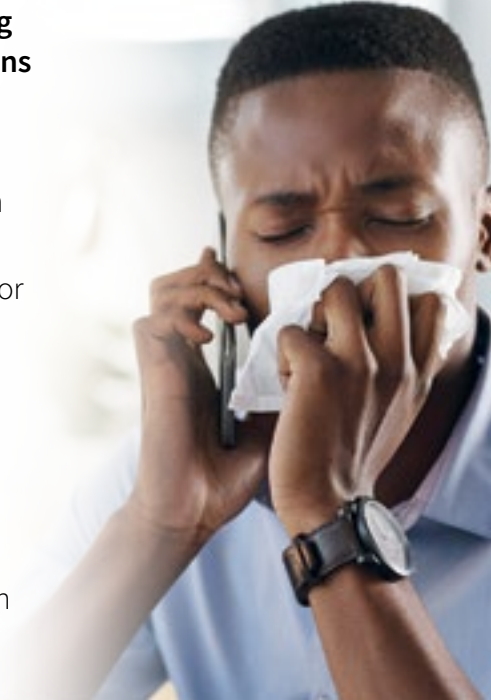
Certain people are more likely to become ill with pneumonia:

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

There are several strategies for preventing pneumonia and other respiratory infections such as colds and the flu:

- 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. In the United States, several vaccines prevent infections that can cause pneumonia, including Pneumococcal, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), Pertussis (whooping cough) and seasonal influenza (flu) vaccines. Talk to your health care provider for more information on these vaccines.



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