



The Spine Column

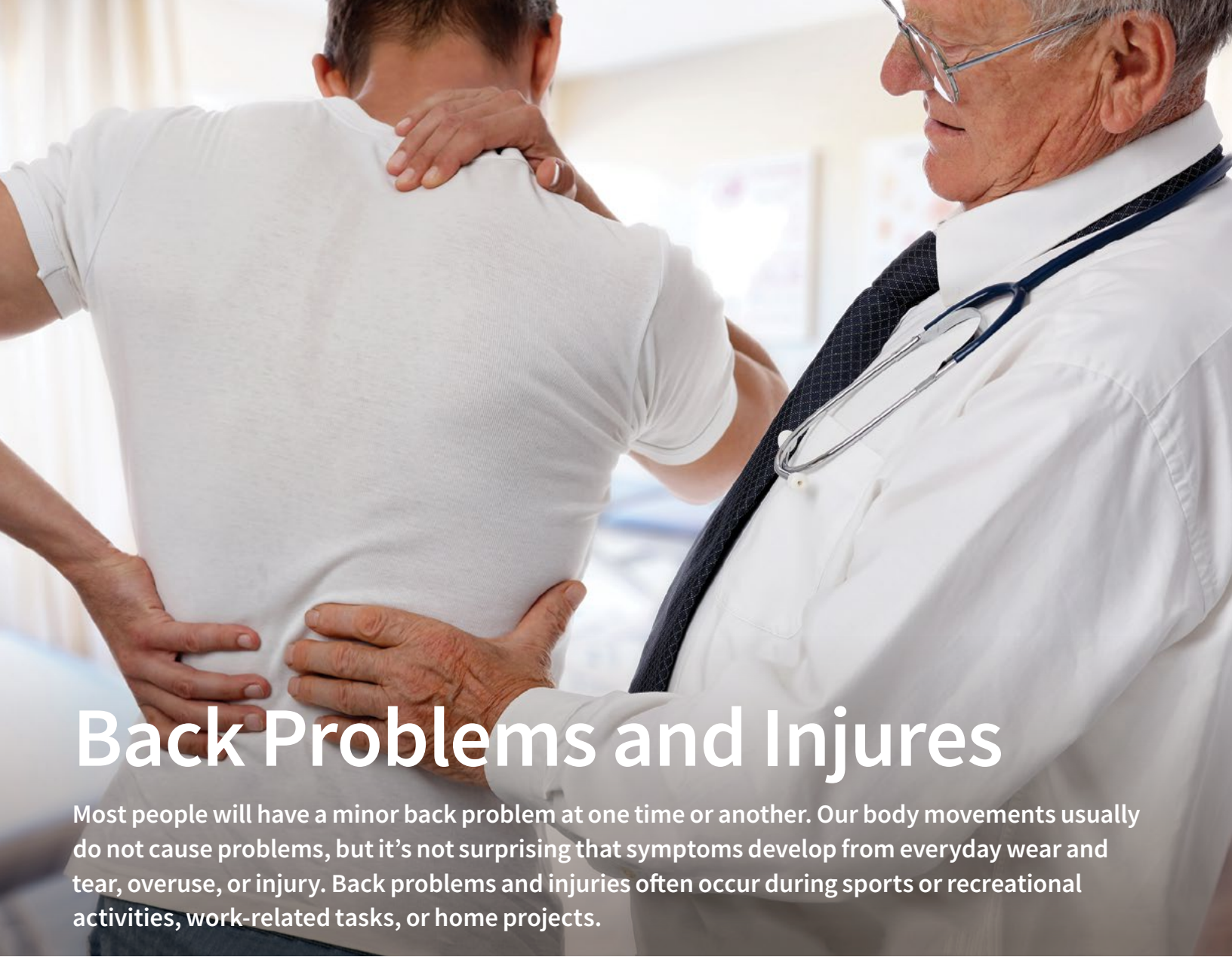
A Special Newsletter for MVP Members



Y0051_3755

MVPLIN0016 (04/2018) ©2018 MVP Health Care, Inc.

Issue 1 | 2018



Back Problems and Injuries

Most people will have a minor back problem at one time or another. Our body movements usually do not cause problems, but it's not surprising that symptoms develop from everyday wear and tear, overuse, or injury. Back problems and injuries often occur during sports or recreational activities, work-related tasks, or home projects.

Back pain can cause problems anywhere from the neck to the tailbone (coccyx).

The back includes:

- The bones and joints of the spine (vertebrae).
- The discs that separate the vertebrae and absorb shock as you move.
- The muscles and ligaments that hold the spine together.

Back injuries are the most common cause of back pain. Injuries frequently occur when you use your back muscles in activities that you do not do very often, such as lifting a heavy object or doing yard work. Minor injuries also may occur from tripping, falling a short distance, or excessive twisting of the spine. Severe back injuries may result from car accidents, falls from significant heights, direct blows to the back or the top of the head, a high-energy fall

onto the buttocks, or a penetrating injury such as a stab wound.

Although back pain is often caused by an injury to one or more of the structures of the back, it may have another cause. Some people are more likely to develop back pain than others. Things that increase your risk for back pain and injury include getting older, having a family history of back pain, sitting for long periods, lifting or pulling heavy objects, and having a degenerative disease such as osteoporosis.

Slumping or slouching alone may not cause low back pain. But after the back has been strained or injured, bad posture can make pain worse. "Good posture" generally means your ears, shoulders, and hips are in a straight line. If this posture causes pain, you may have another condition such as a problem with a disc or bones in your back.

Sudden (Acute) Injuries

Pain from an injury may be sudden and severe. Bruising and swelling may develop soon after the injury. Pain from an acute injury usually does not last longer than six weeks.

Acute injuries include:

- **An injury to the ligaments or muscles in the back**, such as a sprain or a strain.
- **A fracture or dislocation of the spine.** This can cause a spinal cord injury that may lead to permanent paralysis. It is important to immobilize and transport the injured person correctly to reduce the risk of permanent paralysis.
- **A torn or ruptured disc.** If the tear is large enough, the jellylike material inside the disc may leak out (herniate) and press against a nerve.
- An injury that causes the compression of nerves in the lower back (cauda equina syndrome).

Overuse Injuries

You may not remember a specific injury, especially if your symptoms began gradually or during everyday activities. These injuries occur most often

from improper movement or posture while lifting, standing, walking, or sitting, or even while sleeping. Symptoms can include pain, muscle spasms, and stiffness. The pain often goes away within four weeks without any treatment.

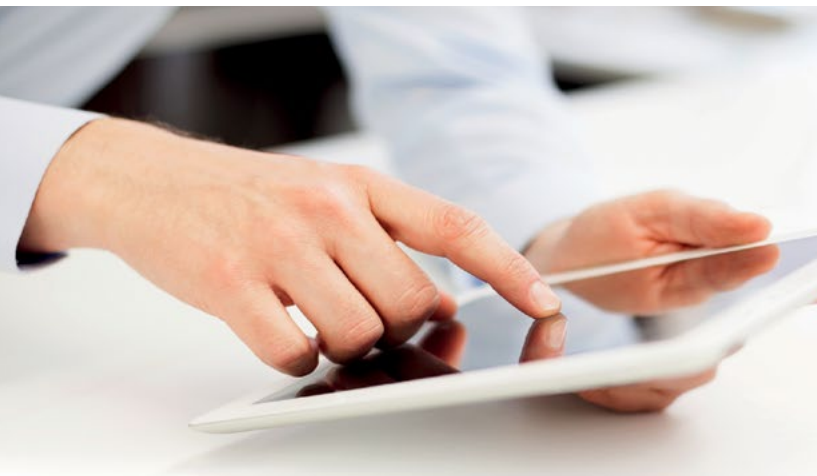
Treatment

Most back pain will get better and go away by itself in one to four weeks. Home treatment will often help relieve back pain that is caused by minor injuries. It is usually a good idea to continue your regular activities while your back is healing. Avoid heavy lifting and activities that seem to make your back problems worse.

Other treatments for a back problem or injury may include first aid measures, physical therapy, manipulative therapy (such as chiropractic), medicine, and, in some cases, surgery. Treatment depends on:

- The location, type, and severity of the injury.
- Your age, health condition, and activities (such as work, sports, or hobbies).

©2017 Healthwise, Incorporated, reprinted with permission for personal use only. Content shall not be further distributed. This information does not replace the advice of a doctor. MVP Health Care and Healthwise disclaim any warranty or liability for your use of this information.



MVP has online resources available 24 hours a day to help you take charge of your health.

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.

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.



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.



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)



PRSRST STD
US Postage
PAID
MVP Health Care

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

