

wellnessNEWS

Ideas to help you *LIVE WELL* from the ENCANA WELLNESS CENTRE

You've got to move it, move it.

By Heather Curilla, physiotherapist

Next to the common cold, low back pain is one of the most common ailments for which North Americans seek medical advice. Three out of four people will suffer from some degree of low back pain in their lifetime.

There is help for low back pain sufferers. Treatment from medical practitioners has proven effective, and the sooner you seek treatment the faster you will heal. The number one step you can take to prevent the development of low back pain or to prevent its intensity is to move. Research shows changing your body position every 20 minutes is essential in maintaining a healthy back.

Also, core exercises such as sit-ups, crunches and back extensions have been shown to reduce and prevent further episodes of low back pain. Keep these in mind to enjoy a pain-free lifestyle.

More tips for preventing back pain:

(Source: www.worksafefbc.com)

- * Exercise regularly and keep your weight within a healthy range.
- * Reduce your stress levels by practicing relaxation techniques and taking deep breaths which will help decrease muscle tension and spasms.
- * If you are a smoker, choose to quit or decrease your tobacco intake. Smoking increases your pain because your blood has trouble delivering oxygen to the working tissues, which makes your back weaker. Call our Tobacco Reduction Educator, Shermin Murji, at 440.5619 for assistance.
- * Maintain the natural curve of your back throughout the day by sitting tall with your feet flat on the floor.
- * Wear comfortable and well-supported shoes.
- * Sleep on a comfortable and supportive mattress. If you sleep on your side, place a pillow between your knees.
- * When driving, adjust your seat so your arms are relaxed and bent to the steering wheel.
- * Stretch to keep your lower back and legs flexible.

Did you know?

The EnCana Wellness Centre is home to Optimal Therapies, which offers a multidisciplinary health care team including chiropractors, massage therapists, athletic therapists and physiotherapists. Optimal Therapies is open to students, employees and the general public. Call 440.6917 for more information or to book an appointment.

The following are some of the most common causes and diagnoses of back pain:

(Source: <http://www.back.com/causes.html>)

Mechanical Disorders: Many who suffer from back problems are experiencing mechanical pain, which means a specific part of their spine, such as an inter-vertebral disc, a ligament, or a joint, is damaged and not working correctly.

Developmental Disorders: Developmental disorders of the lower back are caused by abnormalities in the formation and growth of the skeleton. Although the treatment for many of these conditions is conservative, surgery may be required to keep some disorders from worsening, and to prevent long-term disability and/or deformity.

Inflammatory and Infectious Disorders: Infections of the spinal column are not common, but they are important because they are difficult to diagnose and there are serious consequences in the delay of an accurate diagnosis.

Trauma: Trauma to the spine refers to injury that has occurred to bony elements, soft tissues and/or neurological structures. This can be caused by a car accident, a sporting accident or a simple fall.

If you suspect any of the above, please contact Health Services 440.6326 or Optimal Therapies 440.6917 to schedule an appointment with a professional.