

WHAT'S YOUR RISK FOR BACK PAIN?

There is a lot you can do to minimize the stress on your back. Take this quiz to find out your risk for back pain.*

Lifestyle

1. Do you exercise on a regular basis? Yes Sometimes No
2. Do you carry a purse or knapsack over one shoulder? Yes Sometimes No
3. Do you wear shoes with heels more than 2" high? Yes Sometimes No
4. Are you overweight? Yes Sometimes No
5. Do you build stress-relieving activities into your day? Yes Sometimes No

Workplace

1. Do you stand for long hours on your feet? Yes Sometimes No
2. Does your job require frequent bending or lifting? Yes Sometimes No
3. Are your computer set-up and office chair in proper alignment? Yes Sometimes No
4. Do you make time for frequent stretch breaks at work? Yes Sometimes No
5. Do you have a supportive chair for deskwork? Yes Sometimes No

Sports and Physical Activity

1. Do you warm-up before beginning any sports activity? Yes Sometimes No
2. Do you wear protective gear when roller-blading, playing hockey or engaging in other contact sports? Yes Sometimes No
3. Does your equipment fit properly? Yes Sometimes No
4. Do you push yourself hard when exercising? Yes Sometimes No
5. Do you get in shape before starting a new seasonal activity? Yes Sometimes No

At Home

1. Do you sleep on your stomach? Yes Sometimes No
2. Do you have a firm mattress and a supportive pillow? Yes Sometimes No
3. Do you get help from someone when lifting heavy objects? Yes Sometimes No
4. Do you care for children under the age of three? Yes Sometimes No
5. Do you practice good shoveling techniques when digging, or removing snow? Yes Sometimes No

* This is not a clinical diagnostic tool. Consult a health professional for a comprehensive assessment, diagnosis and treatment advice.

Add up your score using the chart below. If you scored:

- **0-14** Congratulations! You're giving your back a helping hand.
- **15-29** Not bad but you may want to take a look at your back health habits.
- **30-40** Ouch! You may already be experiencing back pain which limits your lifestyle.

Lifestyle

1. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2
2. Yes = 2 Sometimes = 1 No = 0
3. Yes = 2 Sometimes = 1 No = 0
4. Yes = 2 Sometimes = 1 No = 0
5. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2

Workplace

1. Yes = 2 Sometimes = 1 No = 0
2. Yes = 2 Sometimes = 1 No = 0
3. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2
4. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2
5. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2

Sports/Activity

1. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2
2. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2
3. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2
4. Yes = 2 Sometimes = 1 No = 0
5. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2

At Home

1. Yes = 2 Sometimes = 1 No = 0
2. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2
3. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2
4. Yes = 2 Sometimes = 1 No = 0
5. Yes = 0 Sometimes = 1 No = 2

THE CARE IS THERE.

More than a third of back pain sufferers find help at the hands of health professionals. Using different therapies, these patients have found relief from both the pain and the problem. Among the therapies they've chosen are chiropractic care, which can restore and maintain health through the gentle manipulation of joints and the spine, physiotherapy, which can provide treatments and exercises to strengthen your back, and massage therapy, which can relieve the additional strain that back pain puts on your muscles.

Health professionals are working together to fight back pain.

Ultimately, the success of any treatment relies on patients taking an active role in it. Simple things to keep in mind include stretching before physical activities, keeping backpacks and purses light, and stretching after an hour of television or sitting at the computer.

Together with physicians, chiropractors, nurses, pharmacists and physiotherapists, patients have a key role to play in finding and following the most appropriate treatment options. By combining the expertise of various health professionals, back pain sufferers are more likely to benefit from care that will get them back on their feet for good.

The Canadian Chiropractic Association is the professional group that represents 5,400 Doctors of Chiropractic in ten provincial associations in Canada. Our mission is to help Canadians live healthier lives by informing them about the benefits of chiropractic care, promoting the integration of chiropractic into the health care system, and facilitating chiropractic research. If you would like more information about chiropractic treatment in Canada or in your region, contact us at the numbers and/or addresses below.

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What's
HOLDING
you **BACK?**

WHEN A BACK IS IN PAIN, IT'S FELT BY EVERYONE.

Maybe it's an unnerving sound or a searing twinge. But when back pain hits, life is about to be disrupted. It's a problem that affects the millions of Canadians who suffer, their families, friends and employers.

And just about everyone will feel it one day.

In fact, 80% of Canadians will suffer from back pain in their lifetimes. In a recent Environics poll, nearly two-thirds of adults in Canada said they experienced moderate to severe back pain in the past year, causing them to lose anywhere from a day to more than a month off work. According to Health Canada, back pain is an \$8 billion a year issue in this country.

The findings also show that almost half the people asked said that coping with back pain made it more difficult to concentrate on everyday tasks—which means not just dealing with the pain, but also having to manage the disruption it causes in their life and the lives of those around them.

The main causes of back pain are improper lifting, carrying heavy articles, sports injuries, poor posture, health conditions and work-related injuries. Many ordinary activities like working at a computer and driving can lead to a posture that puts additional pressure on your lower back. By the time you feel pain, the problem has most likely been in the making for some time.

"I THOUGHT IT WOULD GO AWAY BY ITSELF."

Almost nine out of 10 Canadians rate back pain as an important public issue when asked. And they put their money where their mouths are: in 1999, Canadians spent \$21.5 million on back pain products. Yet while many of these avenues offer relief, they may not get at the root of the problem.

Back pain affects Canadians of all ages and slightly more women than men. Its effects have the greatest impact on adults under 45, and is only second to arthritis in those 45 to 65 years of age. For them, it's the number one cause of limited activity, keeping them home from work, out of the game and away from the garden.

When dealing with back pain, many Canadians simply choose not to.

While some people treat only their pain, others ignore it altogether, dismissing its severity or thinking it will just go away. But because so many people's everyday activities contribute to the problem, backs are routinely and repeatedly exposed to risks. And the reality is that ignoring the problem doesn't make it go away. In fact, it can make it worse.

For Canadians suffering from back pain, getting back on their feet means taking an active role in treating not just the symptoms, but also the problem. And to help them, there is a whole range of health professionals, offering many different treatment options.

WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?

Are you holding back from taking charge of your back pain? Take the quiz and find out.*

1. Do you experience recurring back pain that comes and goes every month or so? Yes No
2. Do you experience daily or weekly back pain? Yes No
3. Do you miss out on sports or physical activities as a result of back pain? Yes No
4. Do you believe there is no effective treatment for back pain? Yes No
5. Are you concerned that treatment for back pain might not be covered by your benefits plan or provincial health plan? Yes No
6. Have you taken pain relievers for more than three days in a row to treat back pain? Yes No
7. Are you worried about what a diagnosis might mean if you visit a health professional? Yes No
8. Do you hope your back pain will go away on its own? Yes No
9. Are you too busy to seek treatment for your back pain? Yes No
10. Do you just "tough it out" when you experience back pain? Yes No

If you answered "yes" to four or more of the questions or "yes" to questions 9 or 10, you are probably avoiding dealing with back pain that is limiting your life. Back pain can be treated. Stop holding back and talk to a health professional.

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