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Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center Tips To Prevent Back Pain

Plainfield, NJ—Four out of five adults have at least one bout of back pain during their lifetime. In fact, back pain is one of the most common reasons for health care visits and missed work. But, according to Daniel Simon, MD of Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center, you can prevent most back pain.

There are many things that influence back pain. “As your lower back bears most of the weight and stress of your body, it follows that much of back pain is caused by straining muscles and ligaments. Poor lifting form, heavy lifting, even a sudden awkward movement or muscle spasm can spark back pain,” says Dr. Simon. In some cases, however, there may not be an obvious cause.

Some of the most common back conditions include a herniated disk, sciatica, spinal stenosis, spondylosis, spondylolisthesis, and compression fractures.

Dr. Simon suggests the following four tips to prevent back pain:

1. **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight puts added stress on one’s back, especially the lower back which is the most common site for back pain.
2. **Be active.** Inactivity leads to deconditioning. The back is a complex structure of muscles, bone, joints, ligaments, tendons and discs. Regular activity helps maintain the unity and balance of all those moving parts.
3. **Build your abdominal and core muscles.** Healthy abdominal and core muscles will help provide spinal stability and cushion bones and joints against physical stress, as well as aide overall conditioning.
4. **Learn proper posture, lifting techniques, and sleep positions.** Maintaining the natural arch of the back through correct posture will help distribute stress and weight through the spine and its discs. Slouching creates excessive stress loads on joints and discs. Many back injuries are
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Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center: Tips To Prevent Back Pain, add one

precipitated through lifting techniques which place the entire stress load on the back when the weight could be shared with the rest of the body. Learn to use your leg muscles which are quite strong and will help save your back. Sleep is an opportunity for the back to be relieved of stress. Sleeping with the legs slightly bent at the knee on your back or side allow the back to relax.

If back pain persists for more than 72 hours, see your doctor. In rare cases, back pain can signal a serious medical problem. Seek immediate care if your back pain is constant or intense, especially when lying down or at night; spreads down one or both legs; causes weakness, numbness or tingling in one or both legs; causes new bowel or bladder problems; is associated with abdominal pain or pulsation (throbbing), or fever; follows a fall, blow to your back or other injury; is accompanied by unexplained weight loss; or if this is new pain and you're older than age 50 or have a history of cancer, osteoporosis, steroid use, or drug or alcohol abuse.

Dr. Simon will be discussing back pain and osteoporosis, and providing tips in dealing with the pain in a lecture at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center, Centennial Hall, September 13, 2006, from 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm. To pre-register, please contact Community Outreach at (732) 321-7089.

Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center is a 362-bed acute care facility and houses the Muhlenberg School Nursing, Medical Imaging and Therapeutic Sciences. Since 1877, Muhlenberg, a university-affiliated teaching hospital, has been providing inpatient and outpatient healthcare services.

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