

Health tip: Back for health



According to the American Chiropractic Association, experts estimate that as much as 80% of the population will experience a back problem at some time in their lives.¹

Many back injuries are a result of strain and damage over time, but there are certain motions and risk factors to be aware of:

- Having a job that requires a lot of lifting, carrying or pulling
- Twisting at the waist while lifting or holding a heavy load
- Lifting or carrying objects with awkward or odd shapes
- Working in awkward positions
- Using a particular muscle group for long periods of time without relief
- Weak back and abdominal muscles
- Being overweight and inactive

To help avoid back pain consider the following practices:

- Maintain a healthier diet and weight
- Stay active
- Maintain proper posture
- Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes
- Sleep on a mattress of medium firmness to minimize any curve in your spine
- Lift with your knees, keep the object close to your body, and do not twist when lifting
- Quit smoking
- Work with your doctor or a chiropractor to ensure that your workstation is ergonomically correct

If you have back pain, there are steps you can take:

- Your first line of support for any health problem should be your primary care physician who can assess your symptoms to determine the best treatment options
- If you don't have a doctor and are looking for one you can find a Premium Designated in-network provider at myuhc.com or through the UnitedHealthcare app
- Call Advocate4Me using the number on your UnitedHealthcare medical ID card to help you make better healthcare decisions regarding your back health, including treatment options and determining the appropriate level of care

Back pain

Back pain is one of the most common reasons for missed work. In fact, back pain is the third most common reason for visits to the doctor's office, outnumbered by skin disorders and joint disorders.¹

Maintain good posture

Poor posture can lead to excessive strain on our postural muscles leading them to be more prone to injury and back pain. Poor posture can be caused by stress, obesity, pregnancy, weak postural muscles, abnormally tight muscles, and high-heeled shoes. In addition, a poor work environment, incorrect working posture, and unhealthy sitting and standing habits can also contribute to poor body positioning.

Sitting properly

Some tips for maintaining a proper posture while sitting include, keeping your feet on the floor and not crossing your legs.

Standing properly

To stand properly, stand straight with your shoulders back and bear your weight primarily on the balls of your feet.

Proper lying position

When laying down, lay on your side or back.

Lift safely

Lifting safely may help you avoid injury. Guidelines for lifting objects safely to reduce the chance of back pain, strain or injury include:

- Avoid unnecessary bending
- Use an aid for excessive weights
- Lift comfortably
- Bend your knees and squat
- Use muscles in legs and arms. Not your back.
- Avoid unnecessary twisting
- Keep objects close to body



Sources:

¹ American Chiropractic Association: <https://www.acatoday.org/Patients/Health-Wellness-Information/Back-Pain-Facts-and-Statistics> Accessed August 2021.

This information is for general informational purposes only and is not intended nor should be construed as medical advice. Individuals should consult an appropriate medical professional to determine what may be right for them.