

# Skeltons Chemists

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## Opening Times

Monday to Friday - 8.30am - 5.30pm

Saturday - 8.30am - 1pm

Sundays & Bank Holidays - Closed

## Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for November 2024

1. How common is lower back pain?
2. What are the risk factors?
3. What are the symptoms?
4. What causes lower back pain?
5. How is lower back pain diagnosed?
6. What are the treatments for lower back pain?
7. What can I do if those don't work?
8. How can I prevent lower back pain?
9. When should I see my GP?
10. How should I lift to avoid injuries?



### Answers on the bottom of P2

### What is lower back pain?

Lower back pain can result from different injuries, conditions or diseases - most often, an injury to muscles or tendons in the back. Pain can range from mild to severe and can make it difficult to walk, sleep, work or do everyday activities. Usually it gets better with rest, pain relievers and ice. If these don't work physical therapy, cortisone injections, hands on treatment can relieve pain and help the healing process.

Lower back pain is common with four out of five people having it at some time in their lives. It is the most common reason people visit their GP. Some people are more likely to have lower back pain. Risk factors include:

- Age - people over 30 suffer more because the disks in the spine wear away with age
- Weight - people who are overweight are more likely to have back pain

- Occupation and lifestyle - jobs and activities that require heavy lifting or bending can increase the risk of a back injury
- Structural problems - conditions such as scoliosis can cause severe back pain
- Disease - people who have a family history of osteoarthritis, certain types of cancer and other disease have a higher risk of lower back pain
- Mental health - back pain can result from depression and anxiety.

### What are the causes of lower back pain?

Many injuries, conditions and diseases can cause lower back pain including:

- ♦ Strains and sprains are the most common cause. This can happen by lifting items that are too heavy or not lifting safely. Some people strain their

back by sneezing, coughing, twisting or bending over.

- ◆ Fractures
- ◆ Disk problems - disks cushion the vertebrae. They can bulge from their position and press on a nerve. With age they can get flatter and offer less protection.
- ◆ Structural problems - something pinching the spinal cord can cause severe sciatic nerve pain and lower back pain.
- ◆ Osteoarthritis can cause lower back pain.
- ◆ Disease - spine tumours, infections and several types of cancer can cause back pain as well as kidney stones and abdominal aortic aneurysm.
- ◆ Spondylolisthesis causes the vertebrae to slip out of place leading to lower back pain.

### **When should I see my GP?**

Lower back pain usually gets better with rest and pain relievers, but you should see your GP if:

- ⇒ The pain doesn't get better after a week
- ⇒ You have tingling, numbness, weakness or pain in your buttocks or legs
- ⇒ You have severe pain or muscle spasms that interfere with your normal activities
- ⇒ You have fever, weight loss, bowel or bladder problems or other unexplained symptoms.

Lower back pain is diagnosed by your GP asking about your symptoms and doing an examination. They may also order imaging studies to get a clear picture of your vertebrae, disks, muscles, ligaments and tendons.



ID 50258648 Lower Back Pain © Cherezoff Dreamstime.com

If rest, ice and over the counter pain killers have not worked there are other treatments:

- ◇ Medications like nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and other prescription drugs
- ◇ Physical therapy
- ◇ Hands on manipulation that can relax tight muscles, reduce pain, and improve posture and alignment
- ◇ Injections into the area that is causing the pain
- ◇ Surgery

### **Can I prevent lower back pain?**

You can't prevent lower back pain that results from disease or structural problems in the spine, but you can reduce your risk by:

- \* Maintaining a healthy weight
- \* Strengthen your abdominal muscles - Pilates and other exercise programmes strengthen core muscles that support your spine
- \* Lift the right way - to avoid injuries, lift with your legs (not your back), hold heavy items close to your body. Try not to twist your torso while you're lifting

**For more information on this or any other minor health problem you may have, chat with one of our trained team.**

Answers: Q1, Around 4 out of 5 people have it at some point in their lives. Q2, age, weight, overall health, occupation and lifestyle, structural problems, disease and mental health. Q3, Pain may come on suddenly or after a specific event. The pain may be sharp or dull and achy and it may radiate to your bottom or down the back of your legs. Q4, Strains, fractures, disk problems, structural problems, arthritis, disease, spondylolisthesis. Q5, From your symptoms, a physical exam and possibly imaging studies to see clear pictures of your vertebrae, disks, muscles, ligaments, tendons and other soft tissues. Q6, It usually gets better with rest, ice and over the counter pain killers. Q7, Try physical therapy, hands-on manipulation, steroid injections, surgery. Q8, You can't if it is the result of disease or structural problems, but you can reduce the risk by maintaining a healthy weight, strengthening your abdominal muscles and lifting the right way. Q9, If the pain doesn't go away after a week, you have tingling or numbness in your buttocks or legs, you have severe pain or muscle spasms, you have a fever, weight loss, bowel or bladder problems. Q10, Lift with your legs (not your back).