

The Spine Column

A Special Newsletter for MVP Health Care[®] Members **Issue 1, 2023**

How Is Low Back Pain Treated?

If you have chronic low back pain, treatment to help you understand and manage your pain may include:

- Staying active - this may include walking or doing back exercises
- Physical therapy
- Medicines - some of these medicines may be used for other problems, like depression
- Pain management - your doctor may have you see a pain specialist
- Counseling - having chronic pain can be hard. It may help to talk to someone who can help you cope with your pain

Surgery isn't needed for most people. But it may help some types of low back pain.

Most **acute** low back pain gets better on its own within several weeks. Using heat or ice and taking over-the-counter pain medicine can help while your body heals.

If you aren't getting better on your own or your pain is very bad, your doctor may recommend:

- Physical therapy
- Acupuncture and/or massage
- Seeing a chiropractor
- Injections of steroid medicine in your back (especially for pain that involves your legs)

Contact Us

1-866-942-7966

Monday–Friday,

8:30 am–5 pm

TTY 711

We Value Your Opinion

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at mvp-listens.com.

We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100% confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.

MVP Health Care offers a health management program for members living with chronic back pain. For more information or to see if you qualify, call 1-866-942-7966. MVP's program is based on the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement's (ICSI) health care guidelines for the treatment of adult low back pain. This program must be coordinated with your physician.





Relieve Low Back Pain with Exercise

Activity helps to relieve low back pain and speed your recovery. When your back hurts, keep your body moving. Start with short walks (10-to-20 minutes) every few hours. Only walk distances you can manage without pain.

As your pain improves, and with the OK from your doctor, consider gentle strengthening and stretching exercises. These might include core exercises like curl-ups or pelvic tilts, for example. Start each exercise slowly. Ease off the exercise if you start to have pain. Be sure to tell your doctor or physical therapist about any pain during exercise.

Staying flexible and strong will help protect your back from being injured again. So, after you recover, you might try adding aerobic exercise (walking or biking) on most days of the week. Non-weight-bearing exercise, such as swimming or walking in waist-deep water, tends to be a better choice for certain types of back pain.

Talk to your doctor before you start any exercise program.

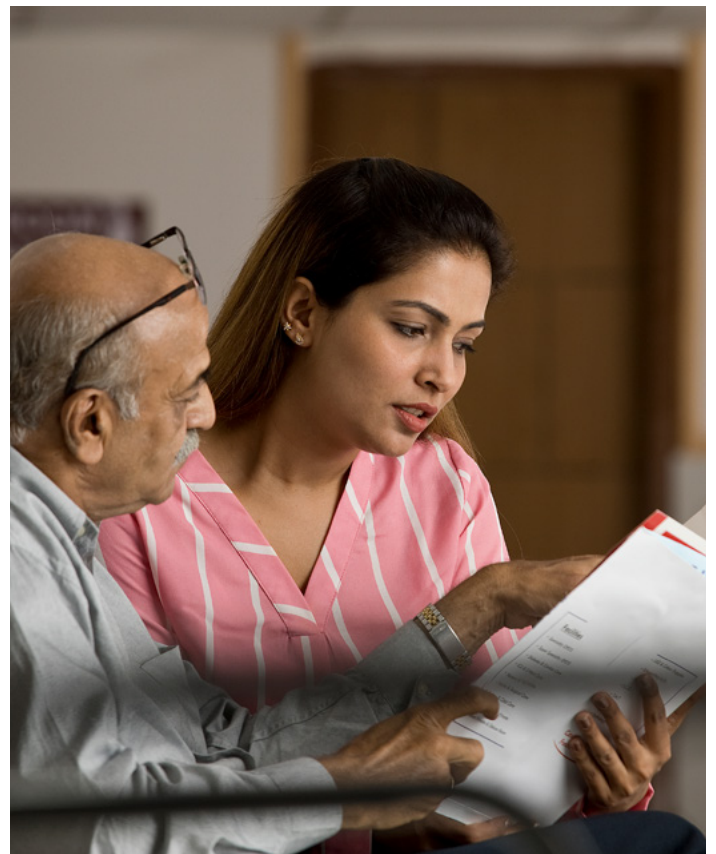
Quick Tips for Your Next Appointment

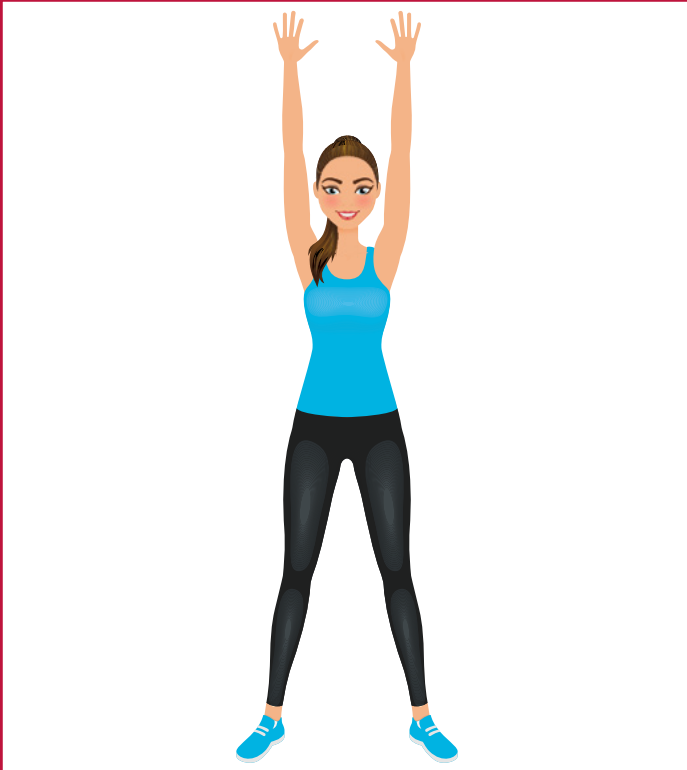
Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results.

Whether your appointment is in-person or virtual, here are some tips to help you and your doctor become better partners in improving your health care:

- Write down your questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get asked and answered
- Bring a “health history” list with you and keep it up to date
- Always bring any medications you are taking, including over-the-counter, or a list of those medications (including when and how often you take them) and their strength
- Bring someone along to help you ask questions and remember the answers

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)





Movement in Focus: Overhead Stretches

Stretching the muscles in your back can help relieve pain and increase flexibility. This makes it easier for your muscles to keep your spine in a good, neutral position.

Start this exercise slowly. Ease off if you start to have pain.

1. Stand comfortably with your feet shoulder-width apart
2. Looking straight ahead, raise both arms over your head and reach toward the ceiling. Do not allow your head to tilt back
3. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, then lower your arms to your sides
4. Repeat two-to-four times

When Should I Use Gia[®]?

The *Gia* by MVP mobile app is a guide to your health, and an easy way for you to talk or text with a doctor anywhere, anytime.

Available 24/7, Gia is a good option when you:

- Want to avoid busy waiting rooms
- Cannot get an appointment with your doctor
- Do not have transportation
- Feel unwell and would prefer to stay home

Did you know that Gia doctors can diagnose and treat many different illnesses? Some of these include:

- Cough or upper respiratory infection
- Cold, flu, and COVID-19
- Allergies, mild allergic reaction, wheezing
- Strep throat
- Ear infection
- Sinus infection
- Muscle or joint pain

And many more!



Based on your symptoms, your Gia doctor can often recommend a treatment plan, or prescribe a medication right from the app. If you do need an in-person visit, your Gia doctor can refer you to the most appropriate care in your area. To learn more about when to use Gia, visit mvphealthcare.com/UsingGia.

Have a **Health Question?**

Our Health Library is your one-stop resource for the latest health information. Visit mvphealthcare.com/HealthandWellness.



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Stay a Step Ahead with Preventive Care

Preventive care helps you stay healthy by screening for illnesses early on when treatment is more effective. Talk to your doctor to find out if you are due for screenings or any other preventive care services.

Living Well Programs

From yoga and strengthening to gardening and meditation, our Living Well programs have something for everyone. Classes and workshops are offered in-person and virtually and can help you live well physically, emotionally, and otherwise! View and register for upcoming classes at mvphealthcare.com/Calendar. Filter by county to find the programs nearest to you.



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