­­Week 1

# Subject: *Beating back pain*: Protecting your back from injury

Welcome to our *Beating back pain* campaign. Your back is strong in many ways, but susceptible to injury in others. Lower back pain is a major cause of lost work time.[[1]](#footnote-2) It can even be disabling. That’s why we want to share information from medical experts on steps you can take to protect your back.

What does low back pain feel like? It may be a constant, uncomfortable ache or a sudden, sharp pain. It may gradually disappear or feel worse over time. You may not even be aware that you hurt your back–yet, suddenly, you’re in pain.

Back injuries can be difficult to diagnose and treat. Although back pain often resolves within six weeks or so, recovery can take a long time for about 20 percent of people affected by back pain. [[2]](#footnote-3), [[3]](#footnote-4) That’s why it’s important to do everything you can to protect your back. We’ll be sharing some great ideas that you can incorporate into your daily life.

Here are a few simple changes you can make to help protect your back:2

* Move more. Even 10 seconds of movement and stretching is better than sitting still.
* Maintain a healthy weight and eat a nutritious diet.
* Avoid sleeping on your stomach. Sleeping on one’s side with the knees drawn up in a fetal position can help open up the joints in the spine and relieve pressure by reducing the curvature of the spine.
* Stand with your weight equally distributed on both of your feet.
* Don’t try to lift objects that are too heavy. Lift from the knees, pull the stomach muscles in, and keep the head down and in line with a straight back. When lifting, keep objects close to the body. Do not twist when lifting.
* Stretch. In particular, stretching your hamstrings can provide relief across your lower back.
* Don’t wear worn out shoes or flip flops. Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes.

Watch for more information about preventing lower back pain. If you have any back issues, even if they seem mild, be sure to discuss them with your doctor.

Week 2

# Subject: *Beating back pain*: Ouch! What’s causing my back pain?

Last week we launched the *Beating back pain* campaign. Our goal is to provide useful information that may keep you from suffering back problems. We’ll also share some of the latest treatment options from the medical community.

It may seem strange, but the origins of back pain can be difficult to diagnose. Here are some examples of origins of back pain, some of which may surprise you:1

* Being a weekend warrior (enjoying sports or exercising only on the weekends)
* Wearing certain shoes such as stilettos, flip-flops or overly-worn shoes
* Constantly feeling stressed and tense
* Hovering over laptops, tablets and smartphones

Don’t risk an incapacitating injury if you can take steps to protect your back. In addition, don’t hesitate to consult your doctor if you’re experiencing any back pain.

1 National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, “Low Back Pain Fact Sheet,” April 2020

Week 3

# Subject: Back pain treatment myths

You have an ache in your lower back. You try to ignore it, hoping it will go away. But it’s getting worse. What should you do?

There are many common misconceptions about how to treat lower back pain. Here are some of them:

## Lying down

You may have been told that lying down is the best way to soothe an aching back, but moving may actually be better for your back.1, 2

## Surgery is your best bet

Surgery is not always the best treatment for alleviating back pain. It is often unjustifiable and may provide only temporary relief.1, 2 Some patients who had surgery weren’t better when compared to patients who underwent non-invasive treatments for back pain.2 Working with your healthcare provider, you can explore non-invasive therapies before opting for surgery.

## Fight through the pain

Don’t ignore or try to fight through the pain. Lower back pain can start out as a minor problem, but it can become chronic over time. A chronic condition is persistent or recurring and can be difficult to treat. It’s also possible that lower back pain might be a symptom of an underlying medical condition, such as kidney stones.3 Check with your doctor and take the time to find a therapy that alleviates your pain safely.

Watch for more information about preventing lower back pain in our *Beating back pain* awareness campaign.

1 Qaseem, A. Annals of Internal Medicine, “Noninvasive Treatments for Acute, Subacute, and Chronic Low Back Pain: A Clinical Practice Guideline from the American College of Physicians.” Volume 166, Issue 7, 4 April 2017, pages: 514-530

2 National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, “Back Pain,” accessed at [www.niams.nih.gov](http://www.niams.nih.gov), last reviewed: July 2019

3 National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, “Low Back Pain Fact Sheet,” April 2020

1. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, “Back Pain,” accessed at [www.niams.nih.gov](http://www.niams.nih.gov), last reviewed: July 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, "Low Back Pain Fact Sheet,” April 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. North American Spine Society, "Acute Low Back Pain," accessed online, June 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)