



Weill Cornell Medicine

Fight Back Against Back Pain



Got back pain that won't go away? Help is on the way.



What's Causing Your Back Pain

Your experience depends on the root cause.



Herniated disc

Aging or trauma causes a spinal disc to push against a nerve root or the spinal cord. You may feel shooting, tingling pain in your back or down one or both legs.



Myofascial pain

Overuse stresses muscles and causes knots. You may have a deep ache or burning sensation, tightness, spasms, stiffness or restricted range of motion.



Pinched nerves

Nerve roots get pinched where they exit the spinal canal, causing shooting pain into the leg or foot. This can be caused by arthritis or wear and tear.



Sacroiliac joint-related pain

Arthritis, inflammation or pregnancy can damage the hip-pelvis junction at the spinal base, leading to pain in the lower back, buttocks, outer hips or groin, especially when climbing stairs or getting up from a chair.



Small joint inflammation

Often caused by arthritis, small facet joints in the spine become inflamed or irritated. Pain may extend into the buttocks or thighs and worsen with bending, twisting or rotating.

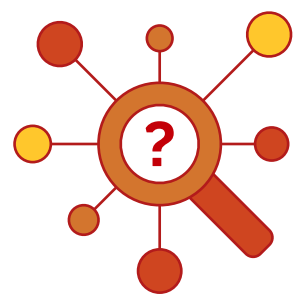


Spinal stenosis

Arthritis or injury narrows the spinal canal, compressing the spinal cord. Pain may be accompanied with leg tingling, numbness or weakness.

Finding the Root Cause

Get relief for back pain with these steps.



1

Comprehensive history

You discuss when the pain started, where it's located, other symptoms experienced and how it affects your life.

2

Physical exam

You undergo a physical exam of the injured area and move in different ways so your health-care provider can identify movements causing pain.

3

Advanced diagnostics & consultation

If appropriate, you undergo imaging exams or consult with one or more specialists.

Nonsurgical Care

A growing number of treatment options help manage back pain without the need for surgery.



Complementary approaches

Acupuncture, cognitive behavioral therapy, tai chi and meditation may reduce pain.



Lifestyle changes

Proper lifting technique, an ergonomic work environment and a healthy sleeping position protect your back.



Physical therapy

Monitored and guided exercise helps strengthen and stabilize your core, improve posture and restore function.



Targeted medications

Anti-inflammatories and muscle relaxants help lower daily pain and ease tension.



Trigger point injections

Pain medication injected directly into your aching muscles can bring relief.

Concerned about back pain? Find a doctor today:
weillcornell.org/doctors



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