

# **LOW BACK PAIN (I)**

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Low back problems affect virtually everyone at some time in their life. Surveys indicate that 50% of working age adults experience low back symptoms yearly, and 15-20% seek medical care. Low back problems rank high among the reasons for physician office visits and are costly in terms of medical treatment, lost productivity and non-monetary costs such as diminished ability to enjoy usual activities. In fact, for persons under the age of 45, low back problems are the most common cause for disability.

Many factors can be responsible for low back pain such as improper sitting or lifting, over exertion trauma or poor posture, as well as trauma from accidents or falls. The vast majority (perhaps 95%) of all low back is mechanical in nature. The Vertebral Subluxation Complex (the loss of motion and improper alignment of the spinal joints) is usually at the core of mechanical back pain. Symptoms include pain, stiffness, loss of motion, muscle spasm and difficulty or inability to complete daily activities at work or at play. These symptoms can vary in frequency and intensity and may, at times, disappear. However, if the cause of the symptoms is not corrected, the symptoms will return.

A growing body of evidence shows chiropractic treatment is the most effective form of therapy for mechanical low back pain. The largest independent analysis of scientific literature, the 1993 MANGA Report, concluded that chiropractic spinal manipulation is more effective and more cost effective than any other treatment for low back pain. A 1992 RAND Corporation review by a panel including medical doctors found that spinal manipulation is an effective, appropriate treatment for low back pain.

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