

# body

# mind

Your Monthly Guide to Good Health

## TAKE CAUTION » AND PUT AN END TO BACK PAIN «

In the United States, back pain is a common complaint, affecting four out of five people at least once during their lives, according to the Mayo Clinic. Risk factors for back pain include obesity, smoking, depression, and a sedentary lifestyle. Fortunately, many cases of back pain are preventable or treatable. Sometimes, however, surgery is necessary to restore proper function.

### CAUSES

Often, back pain is caused by strained muscles and ligaments; improper lifting techniques; and after an uncomfortable or quick, clumsy movement. Back pain is also caused frequently by ruptured or bulging disks, the cartilage-like cushions between the vertebrae of the spine. Other causes include arthritis, osteoporosis, and skeletal irregularities, such as an abnormal curve in the spine.

### PREVENT THE PAIN

Practicing appropriate body mechanics and achieving or maintaining a healthy physical condition can go a long way toward preventing back pain. Consider the following suggestions:

- » While sitting, keep knees and hips level.
- » While standing for long periods, relieve your back by placing one foot at a time on a stool.
- » To lift properly: lift with the legs; bend at the knees while maintaining a straight back; hold the load close to the body; and do not lift and twist at the same time.
- » Engage in regular low-impact exercise, such as walking, and swimming.
- » Participate in core-strengthening exercise to build muscle flexibility and strength.
- » Stop smoking—smoking causes decreased oxygen levels in spinal tissue. For help quitting smoking, talk to your physician.
- » Achieve or maintain a healthy weight to avoid putting additional strain on the back muscles.

### ADDITIONAL SYMPTOMS

Rarely, back pain indicates a serious medical issue. Consult a physician immediately if back pain is accompanied by fever or unexplained weight loss; causes bladder or bowel problems; causes weakness or numbness in one or both legs; or follows a fall or other injury.

**If you experience back pain, consult a physician for diagnosis and treatment options.**



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## Grills, Guys & Good Health

**Monday, June 15 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Desloge Outpatient Center**

Ladies, bring your guys to this mouthwatering event on food, fitness and good health and learn new ideas for making grilling healthy. Get a free analysis of your golf swing, tips to improve your workout and information on reducing health risks with screenings for prostate cancer\*, lung function, blood pressure, vascular health, sleep problems, and back pain.

Plus, get answers to your home repair questions from the experts at Handyman Matters and receive a free mini-massage.

Fee: \$15 per couple or \$8 per person (includes grilling samples and refreshments). To register or for more information, call **314-542-4848**.

\* Fee for prostate screening (\$10)



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