



What to Know About Back Pain

Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey wants to help you get the care you need when you need it.

Back pain is a frequently diagnosed condition, but it's often preventable and treatable. Your pain level doesn't always indicate the severity of the problem, and with some self-care, you may feel better soon.

When You Need Urgent Care

Sometimes back pain requires immediate attention. This includes when you have pain and also:

- Had a fall, an injury to your back, or other trauma
- Have bowel or bladder problems
- Have a fever

Talk to Your Doctor About Pain

Even if your back pain doesn't require urgent care, you should talk to your doctor about your pain, including if you:

- Are not getting relief with home treatments and/or are still in pain after a few weeks
- Have pain so severe that you cannot do routine tasks
- Are over age 50 and this is the first time you have had back pain
- Have a history of cancer, osteoporosis or diabetes

- Have pain that extends down one or both legs or have weakness, tingling or numbness in one or both legs
- Have unexplained weight loss
- Take steroids or other medications that affect the immune system.

Getting Treatment

Your doctor may order tests such as an X-ray, MRI or a CT scan for a diagnosis. Treatments can vary depending on the severity and the cause of the pain, but often include self-care like:

- Behavioral changes, including to how you exercise or sleep
- Complementary and alternative medical treatments
- Hot packs and over-the-counter medicine

Most short-term back pain does not require injections, opioids or surgery. Always talk with your doctor before making changes to your exercise or diet, or if you have questions about taking medicine.

Source: National Institutes of Health

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The information is general in nature and is intended to provide you with an overview of the wellness topic to help you and your family get and stay healthy. It is not intended as a substitute for the professional advice and care of your doctor. If you have any questions or concerns about your health or the health of any of your family members, consult your doctor.

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