

According to CDC, Center for disease control, approximately 28 % of Americans have back pain issue...that's a whopping 70 million Americans ! And the efficacy of traditional spine surgery and instrumentation afforded no long term pain relief in a high percentage of patients, as compared to minimally invasive procedures for back pain and neck pain, according to British Medical Journal, and Annals Of Rheumatology, 2009.

Spine-Related Problems

[Back pain](#) often happens because something is off in the way your spinal joints, muscles, discs, and nerves fit together and move. Your doctor can check to see if you have:

Herniated or slipped discs: If your doctor mentions this, the soft tissue in the discs between your joints has come out. It's usually caused by wear and tear. Herniated discs can [cause pain](#) in your lower back or hip because the nerves there are pressed.

Bulging discs: These protrude, or "bulge," but not as much as with a [herniated disc](#). You don't usually have symptoms with this. You'll feel it if it pushes on a nerve root, though.

Degenerative disc disease: The discs, or "shock absorbers" between your spine's vertebrae, shrink or tear. That causes the bones to rub together. This may happen as you get older.

Inflammation and wear of the sacroiliac joint: This lies where your spine and pelvis come together. It doesn't move much, but it's important because it moves the load of the upper body to the lower body. Swelling and wearing away of the joint cartilage can happen after an injury, because of [arthritis](#), infection, or even [pregnancy](#).

Spinal stenosis : If you have this, your spinal canal has narrowed. That adds pressure on your spine and nerves. As a result, your legs and shoulders probably feel numb. This happens to many people older than 60.

Cervical radiculopathy : This is a [pinched nerve](#). It's usually caused by a [bone spur](#) or a herniated disc.

Spondylolisthesis: A bone in [the spine](#) slips forward and out of place, typically in the lower back. The degenerative form of this condition is [arthritis](#), which weakens the joints and ligaments keeping [the spine](#) aligned. It can cause a disc to move forward over a vertebra.

Accidents and Injuries

Car accidents, falls, muscle sprains, strains, and [fractures](#) are also [causes of back pain](#). Injuries can lead to some of the physical problems, but some can cause pain all on their own.

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Spine or vertebral fractures: A break to your spine can be caused by a hit to the back, a fall, or if you have [osteoporosis](#), a condition that weakens your bones.

Sprains and strains: Injuries to ligaments, muscles, and tendons that support the spine and its joints can lead to back pain. This often happens when you lift something and twist at the same time. It can also happen because of car accidents and [sports injuries](#).

Spasms: You can get these when muscles and tendons are torn in your lower back. They usually happen when you're weightlifting or playing sports.

Lifestyle Triggers

Back pain can be brought on by things you do -- or don't do -- in your day-to-day life, like:

- Slouching at your desk
- Lifting heavy objects
- Being [overweight](#)
- Not [exercising](#)
- [Smoking](#)
- Wearing high heels

Emotions in Play

Don't underestimate the power of feelings to bring on pain. Stress can lead to muscle tension in the back, and [depression](#) and [anxiety](#) may make the pain feel even worse.

Other Causes

Back pain can also be caused by medical conditions like:

Arthritis: This is a joint disease that causes stiffness, swelling, and [inflammation](#).

Osteoarthritis : This type of arthritis happens when your cartilage and bones break down. This most often affects people from middle age onward.

Ankylosing spondylitis : This is a type of arthritis that affects your joints and ligaments along the spine.

Scoliosis, or curvature of the spine: This is usually something you have from birth. If there's pain, it typically starts in mid-life.

Pregnancy: The **weight** you gain when you're expecting can strain your back.

Tumors: In rare cases you can get them in your back. They're usually spread by a **cancer** that started somewhere else in your body.

Less-common causes of back pain are:

- **Kidney stones** and infections
- **Endometriosis**, a buildup of uterine tissue outside the uterus)
- **Osteomyelitis** or discitis, infections in the bones and discs of the spine
- **Fibromyalgia**, a condition that causes widespread **muscle pain**

Depending on the cause of your pain, your treatment could include lifestyle changes, **medication**, or possibly surgery. Talk with your doctor if your back isn't feeling right. He can help you discover what's causing the hurt and can help you feel better.

Abdominal Aortic aneurysm... an enlarged dilated part of abdominal aorta ...should be kept in mind as an occult cause of back pain in individuals over 55 years of age.

Malignant tumours of Pancreas and Lymphoma involving abdominal lymphnodes are other causes of back pain.

Sciatica is by far the commonest and treatable cause of back pain.

What Is Sciatica?

Sciatica refers to back pain caused by a problem with the sciatic nerve. This is a large nerve that runs from the lower back down the back of each leg. When something injures or puts pressure on the sciatic nerve, it can cause pain in the lower back that spreads to the hip, buttocks, and leg. Up to 90% of people recover from sciatica without surgery.

Symptoms of Sciatica

The most common symptom of sciatica is lower back pain that extends through the hip and buttock and down one leg. The pain usually affects only one leg and may get worse when you sit, cough, or sneeze. The leg may also feel numb, weak, or tingly at times. The symptoms of sciatica tend to appear suddenly and can last for days or weeks.

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Sciatica or Other Back Pain?

Up to 85% of Americans experience some type of back pain during their lives. But this doesn't always involve the sciatic nerve. In many cases, back pain is the result of overextending or straining the muscles in the lower back. What most often sets sciatica apart is the way the pain radiates down the leg and into the foot. It may feel like a bad leg cramp that lasts for days.



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Who Gets Sciatica?

Most people who get sciatica are between the ages of 30 and 50. Women may be more likely to develop the problem during pregnancy because of pressure on the sciatic nerve from the developing uterus. Other causes include a herniated disk and degenerative arthritis of the spine.

Cause: Herniated Disk

The most common cause of sciatica is a herniated disk. Disks act like cushions between the vertebrae of your spine. These disks get weaker as you age and become more vulnerable to injury. Sometimes the gel-like center of a disk pushes through its outer lining and presses on the roots of the sciatic nerve. About 1 in 50 people will get a herniated disk at some point in life. Up to a quarter of them will have symptoms that last more than 6 weeks.

