

# Underlying medical conditions that may cause back pain



Lower back pain can be caused by anything from poor posture to overdoing it on the football pitch, but it can also be a symptom of an underlying medical condition.

In fact, back pain could be the only indication you have one of the following conditions:

- Cauda equina syndrome is a rare complication of a ruptured disc in which disc material is pushed into your spinal canal and compresses the bundle of your lumbar and sacral nerve roots, causing loss of bladder and bowel control; Permanent neurological damage may result if left untreated.
- Infections can cause pain when they involve your vertebrae, intervertebral discs or the sacroiliac joints connecting your lower spine to your pelvis.
- Kidney stones can cause sharp pain in your lower back, usually on one side.
- Tumours can occasionally begin in the back, but more often, they appear in the back because of cancer that has spread from somewhere else in your body.
- Abdominal aortic aneurysms occur when the large blood vessel that supplies blood to your abdomen, pelvis, and legs becomes abnormally enlarged; back pain can be a symptom that the aneurysm is becoming larger and could rupture.

In the majority of cases, back pain will improve within a few weeks as it is usually due to a mechanical problem with the muscles or ligaments such as a sprain.

However, if the back pain doesn't alleviate after taking over the counter pain medication regularly for around 2-3 weeks, then seek advice from your GP.

However, if you have back pain and you experience the below symptoms, you should speak to your GP straight away.

- Difficulty in passing urine or controlling your urine flow
- A new feeling of numbness or altered sensation (such as a pins and needles sensation), and particularly to the back passage or genitalia
- Unexplained weight loss

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