



South Central's Health on Blast

Back Pain

Anyone can have back pain, but some things that increase your risk are:

- Getting older. Back pain is more common the older you get. You may first have back pain when you are 30 to 40 years old.
- Poor physical fitness. Back pain is more common in people who are not fit.
- Being overweight. A diet high in calories and fat can make you gain weight. Too much weight can stress the back and cause pain.
- Heredity. Some causes of back pain, forms of arthritis that affects the spine, can have a genetic component.

South Central's Health on Blast

- Other diseases. Some types of arthritis and cancer can cause back pain.
- Your job. Hunching over takes 5 times more energy than sitting up straight. If you work at a desk all day and do not sit up straight, you may also get back pain.
- Smoking. Your body may not be able to get enough nutrients to the disks in your back if you smoke. Smoker's cough may also cause back pain.

Can Back Pain Be Prevented?

The best things you can do to prevent back pain are:

- Exercise often and keep your back muscles strong.
- Maintain a healthy weight or lose weight if you weigh too much. To have strong bones, you need to get enough calcium and vitamin D every day.

South Central's Health on Blast

- Try to stand up straight and avoid heavy lifting when you can. If you do lift something heavy, bend your legs and keep your back straight.

You should see a doctor if you have:

- Numbness or tingling
- Severe pain that does not improve with rest
- Pain after a fall or an injury
- Pain plus any of these problems:
 - Trouble urinating
 - Weakness
 - Numbness in your legs
 - Fever
 - Weight loss when not on a diet.