



Lower (Lumbar) Back Pain

Helpful information for better health for Canadian patients from Dr. Bouchard

Lower back pain is common — affecting about 80% of Canadians at some point in their lifetime. **Almost all back pain will get better with time**, with about 80% of back pain resolving in the first month. There are **important red flags** that your doctor will look for and ask you about that could point to back pain that is more serious and needs investigation or referral. The best thing to do for most back pain is to **stay active, and to stay working** (as pain allows) - **pain medication may help you with this**. For some types of back pain, **rest positions** or **physiotherapy** may help best. Other options that may help you manage your pain include acupuncture and massage therapy.

Rather than focusing on specific body parts or structures that may be injured, it's more effective to treat your pain based on the "pattern" of back pain you have. After discussing your symptoms and examining you, your doctor should be able to recommend treatments that can best help you to feel better sooner.

Pattern 1 — Pain usually worst in the back or buttocks, and made worse when bending forward

<http://objectivehealth.ca/pdfs/healthy-back-exercises1.pdf>

Pattern 2 — Pain worst in the back or buttocks, and made worse when bending backward

<http://objectivehealth.ca/pdfs/healthy-back-exercises2.pdf>

Pattern 3 — Constant pain that is worst in the leg

<http://objectivehealth.ca/pdfs/healthy-back-exercises3.pdf>

Pattern 4 — Pain that is worst in the leg that comes and goes, often better when sitting or lying

<http://objectivehealth.ca/pdfs/healthy-back-exercises4.pdf>

In addition to advice you receive from your physician, I would recommend to all patients an excellent talk on Youtube by Dr. Mike Evans at the University of Toronto: <http://objectivehealth.ca/r/lowerbackpain>