



Don't Let Motherhood Be A Pain In The Back

(NAPSA)—A healthy back is a must for living an active lifestyle. Yet more than 26 million people between the ages of 20 and 64 experience frequent or persistent back pain. Women are especially vulnerable, due to their varied role responsibilities including, taking care of children and family, household management and outside employment. In fact, 40 percent of women 18 years and older with children living at home report back or neck pain limits their activities, compared to 24 percent of women without children living at home.

Left untreated, back pain can reduce a person's quality of life, restrict everyday activities and limit the ability to work. The lower spine is the source of such movements as twisting or bending, along with standing, walking and lifting. Therefore, proper functioning of the lower back is needed for almost all activities of daily living.

What causes acute back pain?

A sprain or strain can occur when a sudden or forceful movement injures a ligament in the lower back, which has become stiff or weak through poor conditioning or overuse.

Other causes include lifting something incorrectly, sitting or standing for too long, lack of exercise, foot or leg problems that alter the way a person walks and injuries or accidents.

Common causes of chronic back pain

The natural effects of the normal aging process on the body, such as osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, can result in back pain.

A ruptured or "herniated" disk, which places pressure on spinal column nerves, and sciatica—a pain that radiates from the lower back down through the legs—also can cause pain.

Diagnosing the cause

During an initial examination,



Women's active lifestyles make them susceptible to back injuries.

physicians will ask about symptoms and injuries. In most cases, physicians will examine a patient's spine and legs in their office. If the pain does not respond to treatment or becomes worse, X-rays or magnetic resonance imaging may be needed.

Treatment options

Treatments including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), non-opioid analgesics and non-drug treatments, such as activity modification are commonly used to manage back pain. Opioids may be used to treat moderate to severe pain. Severe, chronic back pain may require an epidural block or surgery.

Light activity can speed up recovery. Resting for more than four days can delay the healing process by weakening the muscles and bones. The best long-term treatment is prevention. Maintaining physical condition and using proper lifting and postural techniques may prevent future injuries.

For additional information about pain management, consult with your doctor or a pain specialist. Also, mothers can find more information about back pain, as well as back tips in the free "Mothers Against Back Pain" brochure available at the Partners Against Pain Web site, www.partnersagainstpain.com.