

BACK PAIN A Silent Epidemic

Medical Experts Praise Heat Wrap Therapy

(NAPSA)—If you suffer from low back pain, you're not alone.

The good news is that there are many ways you may be able to help take care of your backaches at home.

A recent study led by a sports medicine researcher at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), revealed that continuous low level heat wrap therapy is 52 percent more effective than acetaminophen and 33 percent more effective than ibuprofen for relieving low back pain.

In the six-month study involving 371 patients, participants were given the continuous low level heat wrap therapy for two days to treat acute low back pain. The results showed that the low level heat wrap therapy provided better relief than the analgesics on the day of treatment and that the effects lasted more than 48 hours after the treatment was completed.

"Confirming that this treatment is superior is important to patients because it gives them a non-drug treatment option," said Dr. Scott F. Nadler, director of sports medicine at UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School in Newark and co-investigator of the study. The study was published in the May 15 issue of Spine magazine.

Low back pain is the leading cause of disability in people under age 45 and the cost to society is estimated to range from \$20 to \$50 billion per year, according to statistics provided by the Agency for Healthcare Policy and Research of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

One new type of heat wrap therapy to consider is called



If you're one of the millions of Americans with back pain, you may want to try heat wrap therapy for relief.

ThermaCare, developed by the P&G Health Sciences Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio. It heats to 104°F within 30 minutes of exposure to air and maintains this temperature continuously for at least an eight-hour period of wear.

ThermaCare heat wrap treatment for low back pain proved to be better than oral analgesics because it goes beyond pain relief to provide muscle relaxation and increased flexibility," said Dr. Deborah J. Steiner of Research Testing Laboratories, Inc. of Great Neck, N.Y., who was a co-investigator with Dr. Nadler in the study.

"ThermaCare is an excellent therapeutic device. I have given samples to a number of patients," said Edward J. Bernacki, M.D., M.P.H., Johns Hopkins University. "Furthermore, patients seem to enjoy the soothing benefits of heat over and above its therapeutic qualities."

Before you perform any home remedy, check with your doctor to make sure it's right for you.

To learn more about heat wrap therapy, you can visit the Web site at www.thermacare.com.