



SEPTEMBER 2018

Some Important Information About Low Back Pain

ESSENTIAL PHYSIOTHERAPY

Low back pain (LBP) is thought to affect up to 60 to 80% of the Western population throughout the course of their life. Many people do not have any preceding events to cause this back pain, although specific injuries can also initiate their symptoms. Lower back pain constitutes almost half of all chronic pain. This has a huge effect on quality of life and people with LBP tend to have more time off work and higher of medical costs than those who do not have symptoms.

Sedentary lifestyles, increased body weight, reduced physical activity and poor postures are all contributing factors to LBP. Obesity rates in the western world have never been higher, and this is known to cause greater rates of musculoskeletal pain than ever before. Back pain can strike suddenly or build up slowly over a period of time. Many people report sudden and severe onset of back pain from a seemingly innocent movement. Others find that their back aches towards the end of the workday and follows a regular pattern. Thankfully, more and more workplaces are advocating for better ergonomic set-ups in order to pre-emptively reduce the incidence of LBP amongst employees.

Dealing with back pain is complicated as there are many treatments to choose from. Unfortunately, there is rarely a miracle cure that works for everyone. What research tells us is that effective and timely advice, thorough professional assessment and a tailored exercise program shows the best outcomes in the long term.

There are some cases where your physiotherapist or doctor will suggest that you have imaging such as an x-ray

or MRI. While imaging can be helpful in ruling out serious injuries it is important to realise that if everyone was to have an MRI of their spine, it is reasonable to expect that most people would have changes in the appearance of their spines, even if they don't have any pain or other symptoms. The take-home message is that scans do not always paint an accurate picture of what is happening within a person's back.

The back is made up of a number of different structures that work together to achieve the required movements needed to perform daily activities. With such a complex combination of tissues and joints, aches and pains can be caused by any number of structures. Keeping the muscles and joints of the spine strong and healthy can have a remarkable impact on pain levels regardless of the specific structure causing symptoms.

If you are suffering from back pain, speak to your physiotherapist for advice on how to best manage your symptoms. While no one can prevent back pain with 100% certainty, keeping active, avoiding smoking and maintaining a healthy relationship with alcohol and heavy labour, can reduce your chances of having low back pain.



Brain Teasers

1. Find four consecutive letters in the alphabet and arrange them so that they spell a word.

2. A man is staring at a photograph, when asked who is in the photo, he replies cryptically "Brothers and sisters have I none, but this man's father is my fathers son".

Who is in the photograph?

Did You Know?

Up to 80% of your brain is actually made up of water!

Just another reason to stay hydrated.

PhysioTip

Looking after your health is an investment, not an expense

Biceps Tendinopathy

What is it?

The biceps brachii muscle, commonly known as the biceps, sits between the shoulder and elbow. It has two parts: the long head and short heads. These come together to form the main muscle bulk, which is the "Popeye" part of your upper arm. The biceps brachii muscle runs from the top and front of the shoulder all the way down to the upper forearm. The biceps tendon is the part that attaches the muscle to the bone, both at the shoulder and the elbow.

The biceps muscle functions to bend the elbow and turn the hand to face palm-up. The term "tendinopathy" is used to describe injury and pain of a tendon. This is most commonly due to overuse. Biceps tendinitis tends to affect the long head of the biceps more commonly. Both the tendon itself and the tendon sheath can be the source of pain.

How does it happen?

This condition occurs most commonly due to repeated use of the biceps over a long period of time. People with this condition often present in the later stages of tendon damage, when they begin to experience pain. This means that biceps tendinopathy is a slow-developing condition, without any

symptoms until it reaches the point that the tissues become injured and painful. This is the body's way of self-defence; it is telling you that it doesn't like the activity you are asking it to do.

While specific tasks such as throwing sports, tennis or golf can increase the risk of developing a biceps tendinopathy, often it is simply caused by usual daily activities throughout the course of an adult's life. With aging comes a decrease in the collagen and elastin components of tendons. This contributes to a reduced ability to sustain a high load, which can cause degeneration or inflammation over a longer period of time.

What are the symptoms?

Biceps tendinitis is painful; often aching at night and increasing in intensity when performing overhead tasks such as reaching and lifting. The pain is usually at the front of the shoulder, and can radiate downwards along the front of the arm.

People with this condition often have developed adaptations to their usual movement patterns in order to avoid aggravating this pain. This in itself can lead to other issues such as strained or overworked muscles. An example of this is hitching up the shoulder to the ear when going to use the affected side, as this will help to offload the affected muscle, allowing the biceps to be under less stress. Unfortunately, eventually this will increase the stress on the muscles of the upper neck

and shoulder, leading to secondary aches and pains.

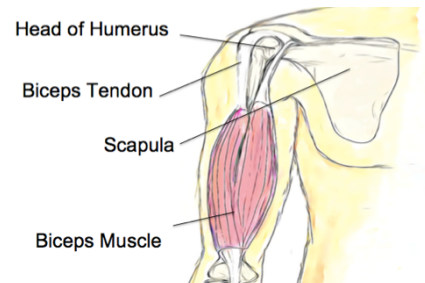
How can physiotherapy help?

Your physiotherapist will assess and diagnose this condition, which will in turn allow for a comprehensive management plan to be put in place. A combination of strengthening, stretching and muscle release is often beneficial to assist in management of this condition.

If you have developed secondary complications with changes to your normal movement patterns, your physiotherapist can assist you in addressing these and training your body to avoid causing further damage.

If further imaging or onward referral is needed, your physiotherapist can help in guiding you through this process.

None of the information in this newsletter is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your individual condition.



Answers: 1. R, S, T, U (They combine to make the word 'Rust')

2. He is looking at a picture of his son

Marinated Basil and Tomato Salad

Ingredients:

3 Fresh Roma Tomatoes
1 small handful of Fresh Basil Leaves, chopped
½ Spanish Red Onion
2 Tbsp. Balsamic Vinegar
2 Tbsp. Olive Oil
1 Tsp. Sugar
Salt & Pepper



1. Finely slice Roma Tomatoes and place on a flat plate. Mix together diced basil leaves, balsamic vinegar, Olive Oil, sugar and pour over tomatoes.
2. Allow tomatoes to sit covered in dressing for at least an hour or up to 8 hours before serving. Finely slice Spanish onions and cover tomatoes.
3. Garnish salad with salt and pepper and fresh basil.

Serve as a side dish, accompanies grilled chicken perfectly.



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