LIFESTYLE LESSONS

Personal risk management tips provided by: AVID Risk Solutions

Did You Know?

Lower back pain is one of the most agonizing and common health conditions in the world, as well as a leading cause of disability. According to the American Chiropractic Association, 1 in 4 adults will experience lower back pain for at least one day during a three-month timespan.

TREATING LOWER BACK PAIN

Although lower back pain is common and usually goes away on its own, there are a number of treatments you can take to prevent or relieve your pain.

Until recently, one of the most recommended treatments was the use of pharmaceuticals such as opioids and steroids. However, the American College of Physicians (ACP) recently published new guidelines that promote noninvasive and therapy-based treatments, and suggest the use of medications only as a last resort.

Here are some common and effective treatments for lower back pain, based on findings from the ACP:

- Use heat or ice packs to reduce pain and swelling.
- Avoid overexertion. Rest will allow any injured tissue and nerve roots to begin to heal. However, too much rest can cause your muscles to weaken.
- Exercise frequently. If you only have minor back pain, stretching or taking walks can help strengthen your muscles and spine. However, a health care professional should help you plan an exercise program if you have severe or chronic lower back pain.
- Take anti-inflammatory drugs or topical pain relievers if exercise and rest don't help to relieve your pain. Opioids and steroids should only be considered as a last resort, and after consulting with a health care professional.

Healthy Hints

One of the best ways to relieve lower back pain or avoid it altogether is to maintain good posture. Try to always sit and stand up straight to avoid putting undue stress on your back. You should also examine the areas of your home and workplace you're around the most to ensure that they're ergonomic and promote a healthy posture.

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