

# Back pain

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According to the Global Burden of Disease 2010, low back pain is the single leading cause of disability worldwide. Furthermore, back pain is common among an older age group, which is why it is important for the younger relatives to stay on top of the treatment of their loved ones.

There are many different treatment options for many different back conditions, ranging from basic therapy to complicated surgery. For minor disc bulges that cause pain in the back and the back only, the doctor will usually recommend physical therapy with a prescription of an anti-inflammatory. Therapy would focus on releasing the tension in the back and increasing back muscle strength. For pain such as disc herniation and spinal stenosis, the pain can also radiate down the nerves and to the hips and legs. If this happens, it may be necessary to go beyond therapy.

One option is epidural injections. In this, the patients receive a shot with steroids to numb the area of the back causing the pain. This would allow for some temporary pain relief, since the nerves are calmed down. This treatment would take the course of several weeks. If a patient is looking for long term relief from disc herniation, one may need to have some minor operation to remove part of the disc.

A discectomy may need to be done to give the patient full pain relief from the nerve compression. In this operation the surgeon will shave off part of the disc that is protruding out from the spine and compressing the nerves. This operation takes only about 30 minutes and is an out patient operation, meaning the patient can return home right away with immediate pain relief. If another spinal condition gets really bad, a major surgery called spinal

fusion may be needed to keep the spine aligned. Spinal fusion is an operation that inserts bars and screws into the different vertebrae to align them together. If a patient has a lot of degeneration in the spine, fusion would join multiple vertebrae together and realign the spine.

This operation would reduce the mobility of the person by a moderate percentage, but the benefits would be significant. As seen, there are multiple different treatment options for patients with back pain. It all depends on the level of pain you have, the time of condition you have, and the level of aggressiveness you want in your treatment. That is why it is very important to stay informed about the different treatment options for back pain so that you can keep your older loved ones informed and give them informed suggestions about the treatment option that is right for them.