

MY ACTION PLAN FOR LOW BACK PAIN

WHY DO I NEED AN ACTION PLAN?

Completing your Low Back Pain Action Plan is a good way to help you understand your doctor's treatment plan. Use your action plan to help you talk with your doctor or other health care provider during office visits so you will know how to best take care of yourself and manage your condition.

HOW DO I USE MY ACTION PLAN?

1. Before your next appointment with your doctor or other health care provider, fill in as much of your action plan as you can. Use your action plan to help you prepare for your office visits.
2. Take your action plan with you to your office visits to help you talk to your doctor or other health care provider about your questions.
3. Keep your action plan within easy reach in your home (on the refrigerator is a good place) so you can review it regularly.
4. Remember to bring your action plan with you whenever you visit your doctor or other health care provider so it will always be up-to-date.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK MY DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER?

1. Am I a candidate for NSAID medications? (medications such as Advil, Aleve, Motrin) **Yes / No**
How much? _____ How often? _____
2. Can I participate in gentle stretching exercises and progress to low-impact exercise within a two-week period? **Yes / No**
3. Should I apply heat or cold to the painful area? How long? _____ How often? _____
4. What is my optimal weight? _____
5. What is a reasonable goal weight for me? _____

NOTIFY YOUR DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WITH THESE WARNING SYMPTOMS

- Loss of bladder control
- Numbness or loss of feeling in rectal area
- Foot drop or dragging of toe that causes me to trip and fall
- Loss of muscle strength, especially in the muscles that allow me to climb stairs or lift my knee toward my nose
- Pain at night that does not go away
- Fever of 100.4 for more than 48 hours

IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO BETWEEN DOCTOR VISITS

1. I will avoid extended bed rest when I have back pain, as directed by my doctor.
2. I will practice good posture when sitting, standing, lifting, carrying objects and sleeping.
3. I will exercise as recommended by my doctor.
4. I should continue to work and resume normal daily activities to promote recovery from low back pain, as directed by my doctor.
5. I will take my medications as prescribed by my doctor.
6. If needed, I will lose weight through diet changes and safe exercises since too much weight puts additional strain on my lower back.
7. I will manage stress in my life by: _____.

Keep this action plan for your own health records.

