

Backache

What is Backache?

Back pain is a common problem that affects most people at some point in their life. Backache describes pain experienced in the lower back or lumbar region that can feel like an ache, tension or stiffness. Pain in the lower back is referred to as lumbago. The pain can be acute, occurring suddenly and of severe intensity, or chronic (lasts for more than 3 months).

Signs and Symptoms

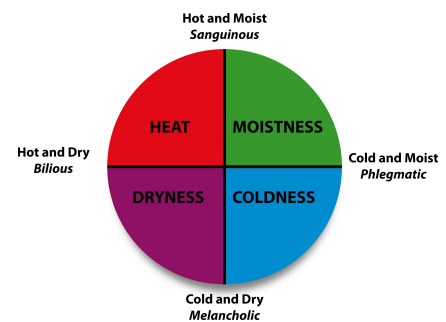
Muscle pain in the lower back, which can radiate into the backside and back of the legs; shooting or stabbing pain; muscle tension in the lower back, resulting in the feeling of stiffness; limited flexibility and range of motion of the back especially when leaning forward and bending back; pain is worse on movement; severe backache may cause the back to tilt to one side, causing a limp or a change in posture.

Causes and Risk Factors

There are multiple causes of backache including: muscle or ligament strain which results from incorrect lifting of heavy objects; from arthritis which causes the joint spaces to narrow; from osteoporosis, which results in brittle and porous bones; and also direct exposure to cold. Historically, people wore vests to keep the back warm and dry. In today's times the lower back area is very often exposed. When we perspire, the evaporation of the sweat brings about coldness which reduces the blood flow to the lower back, so leading to backache.

The Tibb View of Backache

According to Tibb, backache is associated with qualities of **coldness with dryness**. The reduced heat and decreased blood supply can lead to chronic inflammation and chronic backache. Although persons with a melancholic dominant/sub-dominant temperament are predisposed to backache, other temperamental types are also at risk from lack of exercise and being overweight.



Management of Backache

Treatment and management is aimed at **reducing excess coldness** associated with backache, by implementing Tibb Lifestyle Factors that **increase the qualities of heat**. This will assist Physis in addressing both the symptoms and causes of backache.

Tibb Lifestyle Factors

Food and Drink

- Eat **mostly Hot & Moist foods** – such as banana, mutton, ginger, olive oil, turmeric, and honey, **followed by Hot & Dry foods** – like egg, garlic, chicken and mustard.
- Eat **less of Cold & Moist foods** - such as rice, broccoli, milk and cucumber and the **least amount of Cold & Dry food** - like citrus fruit, yogurt and beef should be eaten.
- Drink lukewarm water until symptoms subside. Consume plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- Avoid red meat. It is acidic, so contributes towards pain and inflammation.
- Avoid dehydrating drinks (coffee, tea, alcoholic drinks), and sugar-rich fizzy drinks.
- Follow a detox programme, consisting only of vegetables and fruit, herbal teas and water.

Other Lifestyle Advice

- Practice light exercise, like walking daily. However, if this aggravates the pain, stop walking until there is better resolution of the symptoms.
- Exercises to strengthen the core back muscles are advised. Pilates should be considered to strengthen abdominal and muscles.
- Apply a heat pack over the affected area.
- Keep the area warm by wearing a vest or other appropriate clothing which covers the lower back area.
- At night, sleep with a pillow between your knees.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects. When the condition resolves practice proper bending and lifting techniques. Bend with the knees keeping the object as close to the body as possible before lifting.

Herbal remedies

- Add ¼ - ½ tsp turmeric to 1 cup of hot milk. Add a pinch of black pepper and honey to taste. Drink twice daily.
- **Detox** - Add Epsom salts to bathwater to soothe inflamed muscles.

