



## Sudden onset Low Back Pain. What should I do?

Firstly, stay calm. The vast majority of episodes of low back pain are resolvable and further information on the causes and nature of this condition is available at the 'Low Back Pain' fact sheet. You should however make an appointment so we can get you back on track as soon as possible. There are some things you can do in the interim to start the process.

1. Lie down when you can, preferably on your front.
2. Avoid sitting, or if you must sit, make sure you are in a perfectly upright position.
3. Bending forwards is also generally better avoided in the early stages of an episode of back pain. Your physiotherapist will be able to determine when it is safe to resume bending.
4. Walk around gently as you are able.
5. Extension exercises as depicted in Robin McKenzie's "Treat Your Own Back" book are often useful as a starting point and will be beneficial in over 50% of cases of acute back pain. These books are available from our clinic. Some variants of back pain will need a different exercise. A fully McKenzie trained physiotherapist will be able to identify this for you.
6. Any activity or exercise that causes the pain to spread out further into the leg should be avoided, which activities or exercises that cause the pain to move in closer to the middle of your back (a phenomenon known as centralisation) are appropriate to continue.

### **NOTE:**

With the onset of your pain, if you experience urinary retention or loss of bowel control, and/or altered sensation in the 'saddle' region, this can indicate cauda equina syndrome. The cauda equina is the continuation of your spinal cord and compression of these nerves can cause permanent damage. If you experience these symptoms, you must attend your nearest doctor or emergency department immediately.

Rapidly deteriorating weakness in the leg is also a sign that should prompt you to see your doctor as soon as is practicable. The nerves of your low back supply different muscle groups. Deteriorating weakness of one of these muscle groups can be a sign of compression of one of the individual nerves as they leave your spine.

*We employ professional, experienced, and highly qualified physiotherapists and we offer a range of services and products to meet the needs of our community. Open 6 days a week for your convenience in the heart of Mt Beauty. Home and hospital visits by arrangement.*

**To find out more make an appointment by visiting our clinic at  
5a Hollonds St, Mt Beauty 3699 or call us on 03 5754 1270.**