

## **Back Pain**

Back pain affects thousands of people, but in most cases is not serious and medical treatment is not always necessary.

### **MOST BACK PAIN IS CAUSED BY**

- Stiffness or spasm of the muscles caused by sleeping in an uncomfortable position
- Doing activities you are not used to

### **OTHER CAUSES**

- Being overweight
- Pregnancy
- Incorrect lifting techniques
- A disc between the base of the spine moving out of position or pressing on a nerve

### **COMMON BACK PROBLEMS**

- Pain of the upper or lower back
- Pain spreading from the back of the thigh to the ankle (sciatica)

### **BACK PROBLEMS CAN BE PREVENTED BY**

- Keeping active
- Keeping to a healthy weight
- Sleeping on a firm mattress
- Lifting heavy weights correctly - crouch down, straighten knees and keep your back straight

### **TREATMENT AT HOME**

- Stay in bed, but no longer than one or two days
- Massage the painful area; apply heat
- Take painkillers
- Exercise gently

### **VISITING YOUR OSTEOPATH**

Osteopathy is an established and recognised system of diagnosis and treatment, which lays its main emphasis on the structural and functional integrity of the body. It is distinctive by the fact that it recognises that much of the pain and disability which we suffer stems from abnormalities in the function of the body structure as well as damage caused to it. The 1993 report from the British Medical Association 'Complementary Medicine - New Approaches to Good Practice' recognised osteopathy as a discrete clinical discipline. Osteopathy is the first complementary health care profession to be accorded statutory self-regulation. Since 9th May 2000 it is an offence for anyone to describe themselves as an osteopath and practise as such, unless registered with the General Osteopathic Council.

Whilst back pain is the most common problem seen, osteopathy can help with a wide variety of problems including changes to posture in pregnancy, babies with colic or sleeplessness, repetitive strain injury, postural problems caused by driving or work strain, children with glue ear, the pain of arthritis and sports injuries, amongst others.

## **VISITING YOUR CHIROPRACTOR**

Treatment consists of well defined manipulation techniques which are aimed to improve joint pain and muscle spasms. Chiropractic is currently the second most frequently consulted complementary therapy.

The Medical Research Council have found that chiropractic is more effective than hospital outpatient treatment for lower back pain.

Chiropractic treatment is particularly favoured for easing back pain, sciatica, tension, neck, shoulder and arm pain.