

YOUR CARE POLMED

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5 back pain questions answered



1 in 5 South Africans live with chronic back pain, and over 245 million cases are recorded globally every year. With such a high incidence, it's important to know more about back pain.

1 What causes lower-back pain?

"Lower-back pain often occurs with no known cause," explains Demi Dreyer, physiotherapist. She says common causes of lower-back pain include injuries, degenerative disease, or nerve and spinal cord problems.

2 What can I do to manage my back pain?

- Use heat or ice treatment
- Maintain a healthy diet and weight
- Get enough sleep
- Try meditation and other relaxation strategies
- Take regular breaks between tasks

"Take what you read on the Internet, and other remedies you may receive from family members and friends, with a pinch of salt. It's best to consult a professional for advice," Dreyer adds.

3 Is surgery my only option for chronic back pain?

Conservative management, which involves non-surgical treatments such as physiotherapy, medication and occupational therapy, should be tried first before surgery is considered.

4 How long should I be taking medication for my low back pain?

"There are many different pain medications available. All of them work in different ways and may not be effective for your specific pain. It's best to consult your doctor or pharmacist for more information about the most suitable medication for you, if you are unable to manage without it."

5 Who should I call if I have low back pain?

Back pain that remains unmanaged can be debilitating. Remember to discuss your chronic back pain with your doctor.



Polmed has a Conservative Back and Neck programme. For more details on the Polmed Back and Neck Programme, and to find out whether you qualify, please call Polmed on **0860 765 633** (follow the voice prompts to the Disease Management Programme) between 08:30 and 17:00 Monday to Friday, or send an email to polmedcbrnp@medscheme.co.za.

References:

- <https://jhmhp.amegroups.com/article/view/6055/html>
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32102020/>

If you have any questions or need more information, please call POLMED on 0860 765 633 (select the option for the Disease Management Programme), or send an email to polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za with your membership number and contact details.