

## How to Manage your Back Pain – Paediatric

### What is this leaflet for?

You have been given this leaflet because you have back pain. This leaflet will help you manage your back pain with some simple advice on ways that you can help yourself.

Back pain is common in children and young people but it can cause a great deal of discomfort and can often get in the way of daily activities. Thankfully, most back pain in children will settle down, sometimes it can't be explained but it is rarely because of any serious causes.

### What can I do to help myself?

- *Medication.* If your back pain is restricting you from mobilising or exercising, take Paracetamol and Ibuprofen regularly.
- *Active rest.* If you do a lot of sports or activities it would be a good idea to take a rest from these activities for 2 weeks, you could then begin to gradually return to what you normally do. You can keep active by going on short walks, gentle swimming or bike rides.
- *Keep Moving!* Your back is designed to move so keeping active will help your muscles stretch and stop your spine from getting stiff. Lying down a lot or staying in one position for a long time will not help. It's best to move regularly.
- *Look after your posture.* We will explain about posture later on in this leaflet.
- *Other things which may help.* You can try other therapies that can be effective with helping back pain, such as: gentle massage, hot/cold pack or a TENS machine.

### Is there anything I should avoid doing?

Any activity where you are sitting in one position for a long time can make your back pain worse. For example, spending a long time on devices such as phones, tablets, game consoles or laptops will not help your back; this is because posture can be poor when using them. You should spend no longer than 30 mins on these devices. If you have to use them to study or do your homework then have a short break roughly every 30 mins and move around. It can be useful to set a timer to remind you.

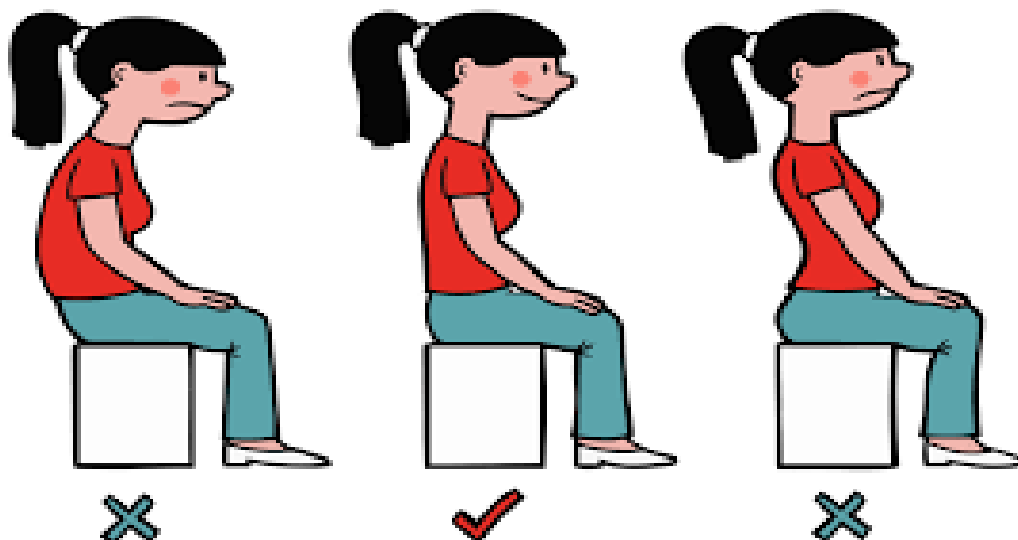
### My school-bag is making my back pain worse.

Unfortunately schoolbags can be really heavy, have a look at your time-table and make sure you are only carrying the textbooks that you need that day. Pack your heaviest items first and wear them nearest to your back, you won't arch your back so much then. A rucksack style bag is best, make sure you put both straps over your shoulders so you are balanced, especially if you have a long walk to school and make sure it fits snugly against your back. If you wear your bag on one shoulder it makes you unbalanced and can worsen your back pain.

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## What is poor posture?

Your posture is how you position yourself when you are sitting or standing. Being aware of your posture and trying to correct it will help your back pain and will reduce the chances of you getting back pain again.



It can be difficult to get used to sitting differently to how you usually do, but it is important as it puts less pressure on your spine and all the structures around it.

## Tips for trying to correct your posture

- Try not to slump – bring your chair close to the table if you can with your legs underneath and your feet on the floor.
- Try to sit up straight in your chair – it's really helpful to sit in a chair with a back, sit with your bottom right at the back of the chair. A rolled-up towel or cushion behind your lower back can help you keep the right position.
- Try not to sit in one position too long – stand up and have a stretch or even moving around in your chair will help.

## I can't get comfortable when I am doing my homework.

Make sure you are following the good posture tips mentioned earlier. If you are using a PC or laptop, aim to have the screen at eye-level so you are not looking down. If you use a tablet it may be worthwhile investing in a tablet stand or mount. Try to do your homework at a desk or table, not on your lap!

## What should I do if my back pain doesn't settle?

If your back pain doesn't settle within 4 to 6 weeks, you should revisit your GP practice to discuss further options of managing it.

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