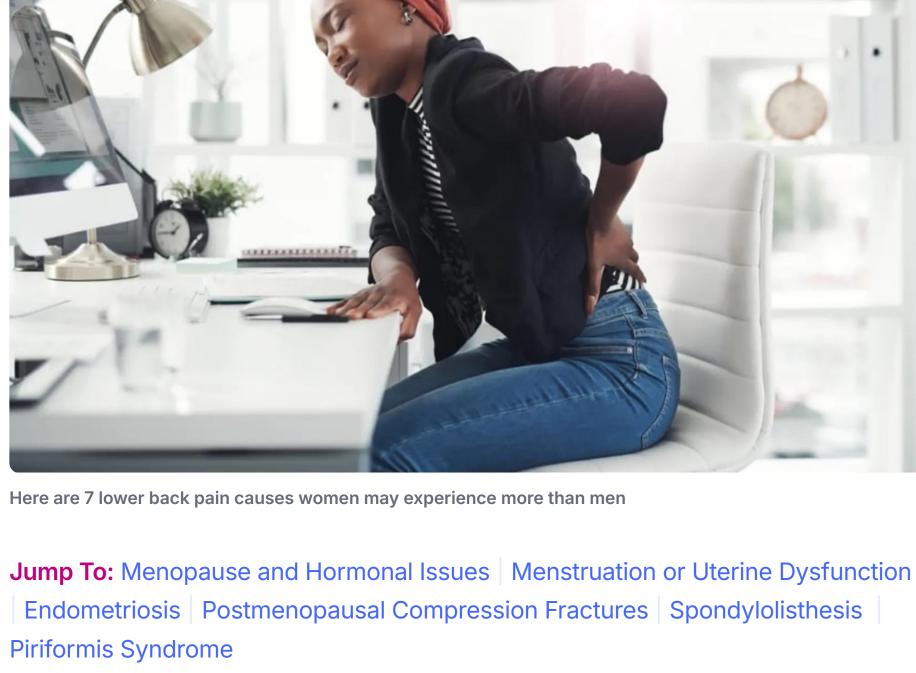
Medically Reviewed

Affect Women Learn what can cause lower back pain in women that men may not have to worry as much—or at all—about.

Sep 4, 2020 By: Michelle Beauclair Medical Reviewer: Joshua T. Wewel, M.D.



Research suggests more than 80% of people experience low back pain during

across all age groups. Back pain in women increases significantly with age.

incidence of low back pain in females versus males post-menopause age.

Menopause and Hormonal Issues

less (or not at all) about.

their lifetime with its prevalence being slightly more common in females than males

Additionally, a 2019 article in the Journal of Mid-Life Health reported an increased

Here are some possible lower back pain causes in females that men may worry

musculoskeletal challenges women face during menopause. Around 70% of perimenopausal women will experience symptoms tied to estrogen deficiency, with musculoskeletal pain reported in over half of women in perimenopause. Most studies demonstrate that increasing menopausal symptoms correlates to chronic back pain symptoms. Menstruation or Uterine Dysfunction

Research suggests that chronic low back pain (LBP) is one of the most common

Dysmenorrhea, a uterine dysfunction which is the origin of frequent and severe cramping for women during menstruation, also predisposes women to back pain. The condition is classified as either primary or secondary, and with both types, low back pain is a common symptom.

perpetuates throughout her life. Its harsh and atypical uterine contractions

Secondary dysmenorrhea usually begins later in life, and it's caused by

Endometriosis is a chronic condition that can also be a cause of back pain in

females. The condition occurs when tissue that behaves like endometrial tissue

grows outside of the uterus, in the pelvic cavity or other areas. The displaced

tissue responds to the body's hormonal changes and can cause swelling, pain,

another condition such as endometriosis or pelvic inflammatory disease.

Primary dysmenorrhea begins when a woman starts her period and

can result in recurrent and severe menstrual cramping.

- Because the endometriosis growths bleed monthly like the uterine lining, without having a place for the blood to go, the excess fluid irritates and inflames surrounding tissue. Consequently, the condition can result in heavy periods, chronic pain, and scar tissue build up.
- Your <u>privacy</u> is important to us.

that radiates down the legs is common, and some females encounter gnawing and

GO

Sign up for our bi-monthly Chronic

throbbing pain that can present from mild to very severe.

Symptoms include: Abdominal or lower back pain Pain upon walking or standing • Pain upon ovulation Pain during voiding and urinary urgency

Pelvic cavity inflammation

Constipation

endometrial cysts.

become a recurring problem which can be triggered by various events in life," notes Brian A. Cole, M.D., F.A.A.O.S., orthopedic spine surgeon, Englewood Spine Associates, Englewood, NJ. "Most back pain resolves by six weeks and is

- considered acute low back pain. When the pain lingers more than 12 weeks it is considered chronic low back pain."
- These small cracks in vertebrae can cause substantial disability and limit function. Osteoporosis is the most common cause of VCFs. Postmenopausal women have an increased risk of osteoporosis due to hormonal changes that decrease bone mineral density, predisposing bones to fracture. Osteoporosis is estimated to occur in 44 million Americans and low bone mass is present in an additional 34 million Americans.

Postmenopausal Compression Fractures

Research studies suggest that in the United States, about 25% of women will

experience vertebral compression fractures (VCFs) of the middle to lower spine

throughout their lifetime. The condition occurs more frequently with age, reaching

"From our observations, we have seen a high incidence of complaints of both neck and low back pain. I suspect that the cause of the increased pain is longer times spent sitting in chairs that are not ergonomic in nature and confining ourselves to smaller workspaces. At work, you are more likely to get up and move around," says

eight-hour work space. The result is more time sitting."

Piriformis Syndrome

Buttock or hip injury

the leg and foot outward. It presents with symptoms consistent with sciatica although it's not spinal in origin. A sign of piriformis syndrome is typically buttock/gluteal pain that shoots, aches, or burns along the leg's back side, thigh, or calf. Also common is tingling in the sciatic nerve area and buttock numbness. That's why it's so commonly mistaken for sciatica. Causes can include:

Sometimes back pain isn't really back pain, it's piriformis syndrome. Piriformis

lower spine to the top of the femur, involuntarily contracts and compresses or

irritates the sciatic nerve. The piriformis muscle aids in helping to rotate and turn

syndrome occurs when the piriformis muscle, a small muscle that extends from the

Sacroiliac joint dysfunction is characterized by inflammation occurring in the sacroiliac joints, located at the connection of the pelvis and lower spine. The condition can present as lower back or buttock pain that can radiate down the legs. The pain may be exacerbated by extended time in stair climbing or standing. Like piriformis syndrome, sacroiliac joint dysfunction can be challenging to

Joint Infection. In rare situations, the SI joints can be subject to infection.

· Arthritis. Sacroiliac joints can experience arthritis from normal wear and tear,

• Traumatic Injury. The sacroiliac joints can be injured in from sudden impacts

diagnose, as it can be mistaken for other low back pain causes.

Here's another case where back pain starts somewhere other than the back.

also known as osteoarthritis.

like a fall or car accident.

- "Most often the pain will resolve on its own without requirements for medication or treatment. It is only such warning signs as pain that lasts more than six weeks, back pain associated with neurologic symptoms down the legs, or a bowel or bladder dysfunction should they be concerned about. If these symptoms or
- **SOURCES**

Michelle Beauclair, Health Writer: Michelle Beauclair is a writer specializing in medical,

financial technology, artificial intelligence, and oil and gas content. Contact her at

Joshua T. Wewel, M.D., Neurosurgeon: Joshua T. Wewel is a neurosurgeon with the Atlanta Brain and Spine Care team at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta, GA. Dr. Wewel earned his **More Like This**

Medically Reviewed Menopause Menopause and Chronic Pain Medically Reviewed

Menopause Signs and Symptoms

How to Survive Menopausal Mayhem

Menopause

Women's Health

Menopause

Your Email... Endometriosis symptoms may present at any menstrual cycle stage. Pelvic pain

Pain Newsletter.

Endometriosis

spotting between periods, and bleeding.

• Pain upon sexual intercourse Pain upon bowel movements and radiating rectal pain • Pain caused by adhesions (scar tissue build up) within the bladder, fallopian tubes, bowls, and ovaries State of being chronically tired

Endometriosis may initially be diagnosed by a doctor finding endometrial growths

upon a pelvic exam and requesting imaging tests to assist in identification of

Back Problems That May Affect Women More Often

we've seen. On the flipside, however, women can also be susceptible to

"Back pain is quite common and the average patient experiences one to two

episodes of low back pain per year. Low back pain can start in your 20s and can

degenerative conditions that affect the structure of the spine.

A woman's reproductive anatomy can sometimes contribute to her back pain, as

40% at age 80.

Spondylolisthesis You may have heard of a slipped disc, but did you know an entire backbone (or even more than one) can slip, too? Spondylolisthesis occurs when one vertebral body, the thick oval bone segment in front of the vertebra, slips against an adjacent

vertebral body resulting in pain or mechanical symptoms. The pain can radiate

through the spine to the hip, back, and into the legs. The condition can be present

from birth, attributed to an unknown cause, or acquired. Some research suggests

that childbirth and hysterectomies can put women at risk for spondylolisthesis.

Spondylolisthesis is most common in the lower lumbar spine, lower back, though it can also present in the cervical spine. It rarely occurs, except in trauma cases, in the thoracic spine. The thoracic spine is the longest section, and is located between the cervical and lumbar regions.

Dr. Cole. "The commute has been eliminated, which usually includes some form of

walking. This saved commute time ends up being added to the work time at home,

thus making the worker more efficient. Now, more work is being done in the same

Intermittent and localized low back pain is typical for lumbar spondylolisthesis. The

pain is exacerbated when the affected region is flexed or directly touched.

 Increased piriformis muscle development (commonly seen in athletes during pre-season training) • Sitting for an extended time (big rig truck drivers, sedentary desk jobs workers, etc.) Abnormal anatomy in the piriformis muscle or sciatic nerve branching relative to the piriformis muscle

Research notes that 0.3% to 6% of all low back pain and/or sciatica cases may be

due to piriformis syndrome. Given annual estimated new cases of sciatica and low

back pain are 40 million annually, the occurrence of piriformis syndrome would be

around 2.4 million yearly. In most cases the condition is present in middle-aged

patient in a 1:6 ratio of male to female affected patients.

SI Joint Dysfunction

- SI joint dysfunction causes: Pregnancy. During pregnancy, the increased weight and altered movement can cause additional stress and wear on joints.

Dr. Cole reports that despite the array of lower back pain causes in females, many

of the cases he sees don't end up needing medication or surgery.

conditions occur, seek medical attention immediately," advises Dr. Cole. © 2024 HealthCentral LLC. All rights reserved.

undergraduate degree from the University of Kansas.

M@beauclairmedia.com or Beau Clair Media.

Medically Reviewed Menopause Is Different for Women of Color Medically Reviewed

same general area, and there are certain conditions that make your core just a

morass of pain. And women may be more susceptible than you might think.

We humans are terrible about pinpointing pain. You might wonder how you can mistake menstrual cramps for back pain ... and then it happens to you. It's all the