

# HEALTHY U

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“Forgiveness is as valuable to the one who forgives as to the one forgiven.” Mary Whitcher

## DEALING WITH BACK PAIN

More than 2/3 of adults experience disabling back pain at least once in their life. UWW students report that 43 % of them have had problems with back pain in the past year. For 97% of adults back pain is mechanical and due to poor posture, awkward or heavy lifting and inadequate exercise. Mechanical means that the pain is due to overuse or poor conditioning of one or a combination of the complex structures that make up the back, including vertebrae, joints, ligaments, muscles and intervertebral discs. Pain is less likely mechanical if the person has fever, has had trauma or is over age 50.

Back pain is usually diagnosed by history and exam.

Further tests such as X ray, CT or MRI are only needed if there are symptoms such as bowel or bladder problems, inability to lift a foot or if symptoms are worsening despite treatment or not resolving over 4 weeks. For episodes of mechanical back pain 75-90% will improve within 4 weeks no matter what treatment is used.

A physician visit is recommended if you have loss of bowel or bladder control, inability to lift one foot, fever, a history of cancer or trauma or symptoms that are not getting better with the treatments recommended below. You may also want to see your provider if you need prescription medications for

Continued on Page 2



## WHAT'S NEW

### Relaxation Break

Thursday, November 29, 12:30-1:15 pm in the rocker room (2023S) Health Center.

### Hot Under the Collar?

Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 3-4 PM in the Rocker Room, Ambrose Health Center Richard Jazdzewski, Psy.D.

### Ask UHCS

Submit your questions anonymously about physical and mental health at [Ask UHCS](#).

More Info on Page 3

## STRESS MANAGEMENT

Do you often find yourself saying, “Sure. I can do it.”, then later you feel stressed out or resentful? Do you contribute to creating a stressful lifestyle for yourself by overcommitting? If so, it’s time to start taking care of yourself the way you would want a friend to take care of you. Sometimes you just have to say no or ask others for help.

Is it hard for you to say no? If so, try thinking of it as saying yes to the commitments you have already made. Let’s say you have five major commitments in your life and it is all you can comfortably handle.

Continued on Page 3

## COLD SELF CARE

### What medications are effective in curing a cold?

- There currently is no medication available to kill or stop the growth of viruses that cause the common cold. Your body’s own natural defenses will over-

come the cold in one to two weeks

- Antibiotics don’t work for viruses
- Overuse of antibiotics creates resistant bacteria
- More information is avail-

able at the [WARN](#) (Wisconsin Antibiotic Resistance Network)

- **What are things I can do to help me feel better when I have cold?**

Continued on Page 3

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

### Back Pain, Cont.

muscle spasm or pain or want to learn exercises for back pain.

#### What can I do to feel better?

Recommended treatment includes relative rest. That means continued activity such as walking etc. without participating in vigorous exercise and straining the area that is painful. Prolonged inactivity is usually detrimental to recovery and an early return to regular activity, particularly walking, is recommended.

Ice or heat to the area is often helpful. There has been a lot of conflicting recommendations as to which to use and when. Some recommend ice early, especially if there has been an injury, and heat later. Others recommend that only ice be used. Each individual may need to try these modalities and see what works best for them.

Medications such as ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatories are often helpful for pain. And if there is considerable muscle spasm involved a muscle relaxant may be added.

As the pain subsides beginning back exercises helps to achieve full recovery.

Other treatments such as physical therapy, chiropractic, massage, acupuncture are very helpful for some patients.

#### How can I prevent it from happening again?

Back pain and injury can be prevented by proper lifting (with bent knees), stretching and activities such as yoga and a regular exercise program. Massage may also help to keep the back from being painful. Back pain is more likely to become chronic (long lasting) in those who smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, use other drugs or have negative social or emotional situations.

Donene Rowe, MD, PhD  
Medical Supervisor for Health Services

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To unsubscribe write to [kilem@uww.edu](mailto:kilem@uww.edu)

This newsletter is not meant to replace the advice of a health care or counseling professional. You should not rely on any information on these pages, or links, to replace consultations with qualified professionals regarding your own specific situation.

## WELLNESS RESOURCE CENTER

If you have back or other body pain, there are a couple of tapes that deal with back pain and pain in general in the Wellness Resource Center. Learn to use your mind to relax your muscles and decrease your experience of pain.

*Healing Your Back:* Learn to alleviate your back pain with muscle relaxation, imagery, self acceptance and patience. Find out how to disconnect the triggers for reinjury. Audiotape

*Managing Pain:* Designed to reduce pain by elevating serotonin levels; refocusing the mind; encouraging feelings of love, gratitude, safety and peace. Guided imagery and affirmations. Audiotape

The Wellness Resource Center is located in the lobby of the Ambrose Health Center. These materials are available for check out for free for 2 weeks. They are located on a library cart under the brochure holders. The center is open Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:30



## Cold Self Care, Cont.

General:

- Rest when you feel tired and don't push yourself
- Drink! Drink! Drink at least 2 quarts of liquids a day avoiding alcohol and caffeine
- Stop smoking and avoid smoking rooms
- Use a humidifier, but clean it daily

Nasal congestion and drainage:

- Drink! Drink!
- Nasal saline spray for moisturizing nasal passages
- Decongestants, such as pseudoephedrine

Sore Throat:

- Drink! Drink!
- Salt water gargles using 1/2tsp. salt in 8 oz. of warm water- Don't swallow
- Analgesics, such as Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, or Aspirin
- Throat lozenges, hard candy

Cough:

- Drink! Drink!
- Guaifensin-dextromethorphan (expectorant and cough suppressive)

### When should I see a health care provider?

- \*Fever over 101 degrees for more than two days
- \*Wheezing, shortness of breath
- \*Chest pain
- \*Difficulty swallowing
- \*Discharge on tonsils
- \*Nausea, vomiting
- \*Ear/facial pain,
- \*Cough, or congestion over 7-10 days
- \*Severe headache and/or neck pain
- \*Stiff neck

### How can I prevent the spread of my cold to others?

- "Cover Your Cough" with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket
- Wash hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

### Information On Colds Is Available At UHCS

- See bulletin board in Front Lobby
- Pick up a copy of the "[Cold Self Care](#)" brochure

Jane R. Fischer, BSN, RN,C  
Nurse Clinician

## Stress Management, Cont.

If you take on a sixth and you get too busy, you will let all the other five down. So you are reconfirming to the first five by not taking on number six.

Are you really the only one who can clean up the apartment, run errands, and drop off the project for the whole group? Sometimes other people are just waiting to be asked, but you never do. Other times people just need to be told you aren't willing to do it and some one else will need to take a turn this time.

To actively manage your stress, share the work load.

## What's New, More Information

### Relaxation Break

Thursday, November 29, 12:30-1:15 pm in the rocker room (2023S) Health Center. Free. Unwind, soothe and reenergize your body and mind. Leave in a state of relaxed alertness. Experience a combination of breathing exercises, self massage, stretching, meditation, and guided imagery.

### Hot Under the Collar?

Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 3-4 PM in the Rocker Room, Ambrose Health Center  
Richard Jazdzewski, Psy.D.

Do you occasionally feel so mad that you "blow up?" Do you regret some of your actions when you are angry? Do you wish that you had better ways to cope with your anger? If you answered yes to any of these questions, this Counseling Corner workshop may be for you.

### Ask UHCS

Submit your questions anonymously about physical and mental health at [Ask UHCS](#). All questions will be read and a limited number will be answered by our staff and posted on our web site.