

14 December 2017

Help is at Hand this Christmas

Between finishing off the Christmas shopping, writing holiday greetings and attending a host of festivities – it's easy to see why Christmas is known as the 'season of giving'. As people continue to give of themselves, they can easily overlook their own health and wellbeing, and ignore the symptoms of back pain.

One in six Australians are experiencing the physical and psychological effects of chronic back problems. Of the estimated 3.7 million people suffering from chronic back problems, many are also likely to suffer from poor quality of life and are unable to engage in an active, healthy life.¹

With around 70-90% of Australians suffering from lower back problems at some point in their lives,² it is fast becoming a major public concern. It is important that all of us, even Santa Claus, can identify chronic back problems and take steps to reduce its effect and try to prevent it.

Chronic Back Problems and Chiropractic

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) defines chronic back pain as a long-term condition. General back pain is usually resolved within a few weeks or months but back pain that lasts for three months or longer is described as 'chronic'.

Chiropractors are qualified to address musculoskeletal disorders and may help relieve the symptoms of chronic back pain. Even at early stages of acute back pain, chiropractors can advise on appropriate measures. Chiropractors use a variety of techniques such as spinal manipulation and manual therapy. They also advise on appropriate lifestyle and dietary modifications to help patients lead healthier lives, and work with other healthcare providers where needed.

"For many people back pain may be prevented or managed with appropriate lifestyle changes and care. It is never too late or too early to take steps to improve spinal health. Improving your overall lifestyle can help prevent chronic back problems and may also address other health issues" says Dr Andrew Lawrence, President of the Chiropractors' Association of Australia (CAA).

Stay Active

People with chronic back problems may find it difficult to exercise but they should try to remain as active as possible. With the combination of warm weather and extra time off, Christmas is a great time to get active. It could be walking to some local Christmas displays, enjoying some window shopping or even volunteering to help people in the local community.

¹ 1 in 6 Australians have chronic back problems (AIHW). aihw.gov.au 2017. Web.

² What are back problems? (AIHW). aihw.gov.au 2017. Web.

Use the Just Start Walking app to incorporate walking into your daily routine. The Just Start Walking app can be downloaded from the App Store.

Lifestyle Changes

Poor posture increases pressure on the spine and can cause tension, soreness, headaches, back pain and fatigue. Good posture keeps the body in its best shape and natural position. When undertaking repetitive activities, such as hanging Christmas decorations, wrapping presents or cooking up a Christmas feast, people should be mindful of their posture and make sure to take breaks.

The Straighten Up app allows people to receive reminders and helpful tips on how to improve your posture, and is available to download from the App Store or Google Play.

For more information on maintaining a healthy spine, please visit the website of the Chiropractors' Association of Australia at <http://www.chiropractors.asn.au>.

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