Marden Medical Centre Patient Participation Group

News Update

Marden Medical Centre News:

For the latest Marden Medical Centre updates please refer to the Surgery website:
https://www.mardenmedicalcentre.nhs.uk/

Spring Covid Booster Campaign - 9 April & 16 April

The Spring Covid Booster vaccine campaign starts on 1 April 2025. It will be available to all patients aged 75 years and over and severely immunosuppressed patients. As usual, we will be sending invitations to eligible patients to book for the vaccine at the surgery on **9 April** and **16 April** with catch-up clinics planned later in April/ May.

Tree Update

We were sorry that the damage caused by tree roots to our drains necessitated the removal of a few trees at the front of the surgery. Relevant permissions were obtained from MBC, and we are looking forward to planting new trees in October.

Minor Pain, Discomfort, and Fever

Some self-care forum fact sheets to have a look at:

Sprains and Strains

SELF-CARE FORUM FACT SHEET NO. 9

This fact sheet helps you know what is normal and what you can expect to happen if you sustain a sprain or strain. It also tells you when you should become concerned and seek advice from a health professional, so that you can work together to find the best way forward.

Useful facts

What is a sprain?
Sprains are due to injured ligaments and often affect the ankle, wrist, thumb and knee. Typical symptoms include pain around a joint, swelling, tenderness, bruising and not being able to use the joint normally or put weight on it. Swelling often occurs almost immediately but the onset of bruising may be delayed.

What is a strain?
Muscle strains are caused by over-stretching or tearing of the muscle and are common in the legs and lower back. Muscle strains usually lead to pain and swelling, bruising, and reduced limb function.

How common are they?
Sprains and strains are common, but often go unreported. Ankle sprain is the most common type of sprain, and often occurs during sports.

What can reduce the of risk sustaining a sprain or strain?
Wearing appropriate footwear, properly warming up before exercising, using good exercise technique and proper use of equipment.

What can I expect to happen?

How long will my symptoms last?
Most sprains and strains get better by themselves and usually get better within four to six weeks with little risk of long-term complications.

When will I be fit again?
Most people will be able to return to full sporting activities at around 12 weeks. However, some severe injuries of larger muscles may take several months to heal.

Will I need any tests?
Most sprains and strains are diagnosed through clinical history-taking and examination. Your doctor may consider further assessments or tests, such as an X-ray or scans, if complications or a fracture (broken bone) are suspected.

Treatment for back pain

Pain relief:

Oral and topical (rub-on) anti-inflammatory painkillers are widely available over-the-counter (OTC). These can be used to relieve pain and reduce swelling. If you need help with these talk to a member of your pharmacy team.

See the section "what can I do to help myself now and in the future" for more information on treating sprains and strains.

Fact Sheet No 9: Sprains and strains V5
The Self-Care Forum. www.selfcareforum.org
Updated Oct 2024. Next review due: Oct 2026

Self-Care Forum
Helping people take care of themselves

What can I do to help myself now and in the future?

As well as pain relief, there are things you can do to help ease symptoms:

PRICE and HARM: Protect the affected limb, Rest it for 48-72 hours, and use Ice as soon as possible after the injury. Using Compression bandages and Elevating (raising) the limb can also reduce swelling.

Avoid **H**eat, **A**lcohol, **R**unning (or any other form of exercise) and **M**assage (HARM) in the first 72 hours after an injury.

Exercises for sprains: As soon as pain allows, gently move the joint in all possible directions to increase and maintain flexibility. Physiotherapy exercises for ankle sprains can be useful.

Immobilising the sprained joint can delay recovery. An exception is in severe ankle sprains, where immobilisation with a brace or cast for 10 days can support recovery.

Rest for strains: For strains it is best if you keep the affected muscle still for a few days after the injury before starting to move it again. Do gentle stretching and strengthening exercises and wear appropriate footwear at home, work and when you take part in sports.

When to seek help

Seek further medical advice if you've suffered a severe sprain or strain that may suggest a broken bone or joint dislocation, if your pain is not controlled by over-the-counter (OTC) medication, or if your sprain or strain does not get better as expected.

Warning symptoms and signs include:

Severity: Your pain is severe and not controlled by OTC medication;

Duration: Your symptoms don't start to improve after 3 to 4 days of self-treatment;

Walking: You can't walk because of your injury, or an affected leg 'gives way' and makes you walk unsteadily;

Deformity: The affected body part is deformed, or shows lumps or bumps;

Movement: You can't move an affected joint;

Circulation: Your skin over the affected area feels numb or looks pale;

Bruising and swelling: You notice more than only mild bruising and swelling.

Where to find out more

A member of your pharmacy team can help with assessing and managing your symptoms.

Or, visit these reputable websites for more information:

NHS Inform, Scotland:
NI Direct, Northern Ireland:
NHS 111, Wales:
NHS Website:
Physio Exercises:

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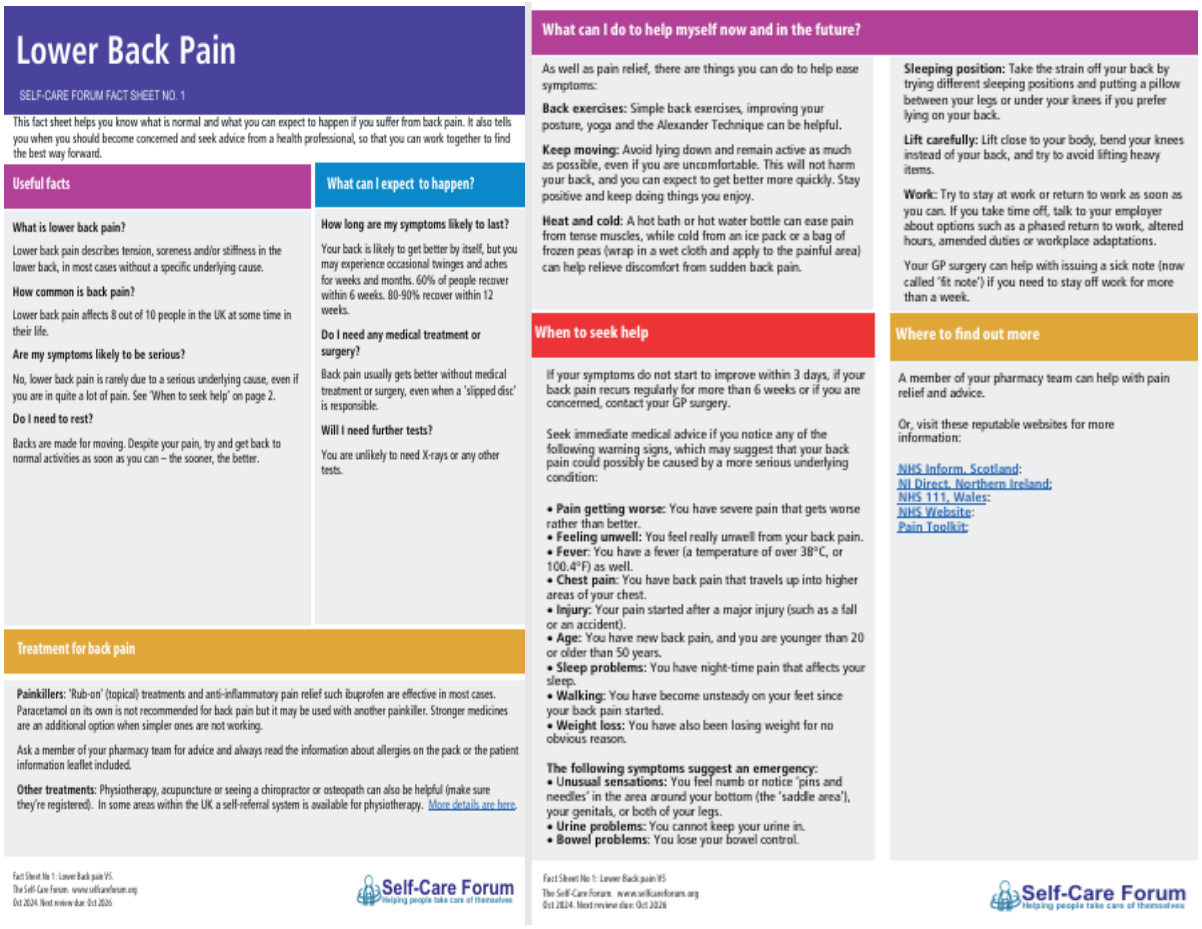
PDF

Sprains and strains self-care fact sheet.pdf

PDF

Back pain self-care fact sheet.pdf



Lower Back Pain

SELF-CARE FORUM FACT SHEET NO. 1

This fact sheet helps you know what is normal and what you can expect to happen if you suffer from back pain. It also tells you when you should become concerned and seek advice from a health professional, so that you can work together to find the best way forward.

Useful facts

What is lower back pain?

Lower back pain describes tension, soreness and/or stiffness in the lower back, in most cases without a specific underlying cause.

How common is back pain?

Lower back pain affects 8 out of 10 people in the UK at some time in their life.

Are my symptoms likely to be serious?

No, lower back pain is rarely due to a serious underlying cause, even if you are in quite a lot of pain. See 'When to seek help' on page 2.

Do I need to rest?

Backs are made for moving. Despite your pain, try and get back to normal activities as soon as you can – the sooner, the better.

What can I expect to happen?

How long are my symptoms likely to last?

Your back is likely to get better by itself, but you may experience occasional twinges and aches for weeks and months. 60% of people recover within 6 weeks. 80-90% recover within 12 weeks.

Do I need any medical treatment or surgery?

Back pain usually gets better without medical treatment or surgery, even when a 'slipped disc' is responsible.

Will I need further tests?

You are unlikely to need X-rays or any other tests.

Treatment for back pain

Painkillers: 'Rub-on' (topical) treatments and anti-inflammatory pain relief such ibuprofen are effective in most cases. Paracetamol on its own is not recommended for back pain but it may be used with another painkiller. Stronger medicines are an additional option when simpler ones are not working.

Ask a member of your pharmacy team for advice and always read the information about allergies on the pack or the patient information leaflet included.

Other treatments: Physiotherapy, acupuncture or seeing a chiropractor or osteopath can also be helpful (make sure they're registered). In some areas within the UK a self-referral system is available for physiotherapy. More details are here.

Fact Sheet No 1: Lower Back pain V5
The Self-Care Forum www.selfcareforum.org
Oct 2024. Next review due: Oct 2026

Self-Care Forum
Helping people take care of themselves

What can I do to help myself now and in the future?

As well as pain relief, there are things you can do to help ease symptoms:

Back exercises: Simple back exercises, improving your posture, yoga and the Alexander Technique can be helpful.

Keep moving: Avoid lying down and remain active as much as possible, even if you are uncomfortable. This will not harm your back, and you can expect to get better more quickly. Stay positive and keep doing things you enjoy.

Heat and cold: A hot bath or hot water bottle can ease pain from tense muscles, while cold from an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas (wrap in a wet cloth and apply to the painful area) can help relieve discomfort from sudden back pain.

Sleeping position: Take the strain off your back by trying different sleeping positions and putting a pillow between your legs or under your knees if you prefer lying on your back.

Lift carefully: Lift close to your body, bend your knees instead of your back, and try to avoid lifting heavy items.

Work: Try to stay at work or return to work as soon as you can. If you take time off, talk to your employer about options such as a phased return to work, altered hours, amended duties or workplace adaptations.

Your GP surgery can help with issuing a sick note (now called 'fit note') if you need to stay off work for more than a week.

When to seek help

If your symptoms do not start to improve within 3 days, if your back pain recurs regularly for more than 6 weeks or if you are concerned, contact your GP surgery.

Seek immediate medical advice if you notice any of the following warning signs, which may suggest that your back pain could possibly be caused by a more serious underlying condition:

- **Pain getting worse:** You have severe pain that gets worse rather than better.
- **Feeling unwell:** You feel really unwell from your back pain.
- **Fever:** You have a fever (a temperature of over 38°C, or 100.4°F) as well.
- **Chest pain:** You have back pain that travels up into higher areas of your chest.
- **Injury:** Your pain started after a major injury (such as a fall or an accident).
- **Age:** You have new back pain, and you are younger than 20 or older than 50 years.
- **Sleep problems:** You have night-time pain that affects your sleep.
- **Walking:** You have become unsteady on your feet since your back pain started.
- **Weight loss:** You have also been losing weight for no obvious reason.

The following symptoms suggest an emergency:

- **Unusual sensations:** You feel numb or notice 'pins and needles' in the area around your bottom (the 'saddle area'), your genitals, or both of your legs.
- **Urine problems:** You cannot keep your urine in.
- **Bowel problems:** You lose your bowel control.

Where to find out more

A member of your pharmacy team can help with pain relief and advice.

Or, visit these reputable websites for more information:

NHS Inform, Scotland:
NI Direct, Northern Ireland:
NHS 111, Wales:
NHS Website:
Pain Toolkit:

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Other News:

Report of Public Mood Towards the NHS – published from The Patients Association

This latest Health Foundation report presents the latest findings from a six-monthly rolling programme of research carried out by Ipsos on behalf of the Health Foundation. The programme aims to track changing public perceptions of health and social care, and to generate policy insights.

The report opens with the observation that the public are less critical of NHS care and services than a year ago, in May 2024. They are also more optimistic for the coming 12 months, with around one in five (21%) thinking the general standard of care will get better, up from 11% in May 2024.

People are more likely to agree that the NHS is providing a good service locally (45% now, against 37% a year ago). There is also a greater sense that government has the right policies for the NHS (17%, up from 8% in May 2024).

When asked about different priority areas for the NHS, the public's top priority is making it easier to get appointments at GP practices (38%). This is followed by improving waiting times for A&E (33%), reducing the number of staff leaving the NHS by improving working conditions (29%), and reducing waste and improving efficiency of NHS services (29%).

The survey found that around three-quarters (73%) of the English public are unaware of the 10 Year Health

Plan. They are, however, generally supportive of the plan's "three shifts". Preventing sickness rather than just treating it is the most popular shift (86% support), followed by moving more care from hospitals to communities (82%). Making better use of technology receives the least support, although support is still high overall (73% support).

On social care, views of general standards have improved, and people are more likely to think social care services will remain about the same (up from 29% to 41%). But they continue to be negative about social care services in their local area, with only 12% agreeing they are good.

The majority of the English public (76%) are unaware of the government's promise to create a National Care Service. However, 40% think the government should prioritise delivering social care reform quickly.

The NHS/healthcare is the public's top priority to receive more public spending in the future, with 65% support. People also support tax increases to maintain spending, though support for this has dropped from 53% to 42%.

Full report can be viewed at **https://www.patientlibrary.net/cgi-bin/library.cgi?page=Featured;;top=239020**

The NHS 10 Year Plan can be found at **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-to-recovery-the-governments-2025-mandate-to-nhs-england/road-to-recovery-the-governments-2025-mandate-to-nhs-england**

April - Stress Awareness Month

Increasing public awareness about both the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic**.** See **Stress Management Society**

Marden Parish Council – Spring 2025 Newsletter

You can view and download the latest MPC Spring 2025 Newsletter which also includes useful Health & Wellbeing information.

The Council have also installed a new AED/Defibrillator outside the Memorial Hall – which is welcome news. We are the process of considering some usage awareness sessions for patients – more details to follow.

https://www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk/community/marden-parish-council-13394/mpc-newsletters/