

## **LOW BACK PAIN**

Low back pain is a condition that is experienced by most people at some time in their lives. Six out of ten people have experienced a severe bout of low back pain. Many people experience low back pain on a daily basis. The most common cause of low back pain is a pinched nerve in the low back. There are five different lumbar vertebrae that can become misaligned in the low back, as well as two pelvic bones and the sacrum. Any of these misalignments can pinch a nerve and cause pain. When a vertebra or pelvic bone becomes misaligned and pinches a nerve it is called a subluxation.

The most common subluxation in the low back is the 5th lumbar vertebra, or L5 for short. There are two parts to a subluxation; misalignment of the vertebra causing pressure on the nerve, and fixation. Simply speaking, the vertebra becomes crooked, pinches the nerve, and gets stuck that way. The first direction a vertebra goes when it becomes misaligned is backwards, it then can turn left or right and bend left or right. Many times the shifting vertebral body compresses the disc, causing a disc bulge or tear. When the vertebra becomes misaligned and pinches the nerve inflammation or swelling often occurs in the tissue around the vertebra and the nerve. If a vertebra has been subluxated for a long time the part you can feel under the skin is often tender to touch. The nerve pressure and pinching can come from the misaligned vertebra, from the bulged disc, from the inflamed tissue, or from all of these problems.

How do you know if you have an L5 subluxation? The most common symptom is pain in the center of your low back at or a little below the belt line. Some times an L5 subluxation can cause sciatica or leg pain. It can also cause numbness in the feet and toes. Low back pain is a very correctable problem in the Chiropractors office. When a new patient comes in we will first ask them where they are hurting, we do a very thorough health history about all of your aches and pains. We then do an examination of the spine and nerves, and take an x-ray if necessary. The examination consists of gentle spinal palpation for tenderness, misalignment and fixation. The x-ray will show the exact angle of misalignment of the misaligned vertebra. We then do a gentle procedure called an adjustment which will re-align the misaligned vertebra and remove the nerve pressure. If you or someone you know has low back pain in the center of the low back, it is probably an L5 subluxation. Regardless of whether you have had low back pain for ten days or ten years, it can almost always be corrected with Chiropractic care if it is coming from a subluxation.

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