

GOOD NEWS FOR BAD BACKS

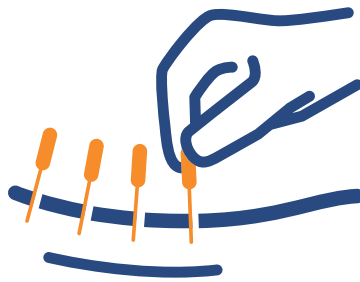
Kinder, Safer, Effective Therapies Are Available

In the past few years, many doctors and conventional health care institutions have shown a new acceptance of treatments that have not been part of mainstream medicine in the United States.

Evidence is increasing that diet and nutrition, acupuncture, biofeedback and lifestyle behavior modifications directly impact disease. Read on to find a new (or old) therapy that may work for you.

Acupuncture*

With more than 10 million treatments administered annually in the U.S. alone, acupuncture has become increasingly popular and one of the most utilized forms of integrative medicine intervention. The rise in acceptance can be attributed to its pain relief efficiency and scientific research that has proven its efficacy. Although acupuncture is newly embraced in the U.S., the ancient Chinese practice can be traced back more than 3,000 years.



Biofeedback*

Biofeedback is a mind-body technique that helps you make subtle changes in your body. It has been proven as an effective way to manage back pain. During biofeedback, you're connected to electrical sensors that help you receive information about your body. The idea behind biofeedback is that you can gain more control over your health by harnessing the power of your mind and becoming aware of what's happening inside your body.



Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness meditation is a technique that has significantly reduced pain in experimental and clinical settings. Daily practice teaches you how to reduce and manage stress and increase a state of relaxation, reducing physical symptoms of pain and unease. Watch the Mindful Meditation session from this year's Cook County Virtual Health Fairs at cookcountyil.gov/service/wellness.

Spinal Manipulation*

Spinal manipulation involves using the hands to adjust, massage or stimulate the spine. Only trained and licensed providers (chiropractors, physical therapists, doctors) should perform these treatments. When a trained specialist performs spinal manipulation, serious side effects are rare. Any minor side effects, such as discomfort in the area, will usually resolve within 1-2 days.

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation*

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) sounds high-tech, but it's relatively simple. TENS is a battery-powered device that sends electrical signals, which interrupt pain signals. A recent study found that TENS provided "significant pain reduction" for people with chronic low back pain. Another study found that a 15-minute session was all that was needed to ease back pain. TENS units are readily available for purchase online, but your primary care physician or physical therapist may be able to recommend the most efficient type.



High Intensity Laser Treatment**

High Intensity Laser Treatment (HILT) therapy is painless and noninvasive. It can be used in the treatment of different clinical conditions. Recently HILT has been introduced in the field of physical medicine. It has been established that laser therapy significantly reduces acute and chronic pain. A reduction of pain after laser treatment is a result of its anti-inflammatory effects, increase in microcirculation and stimulation of immune responses.

In a recent study, patients with chronic low back pain were treated with a high-intensity laser. The result was significantly reduced low back pain, reduced disability and improved range of motion. Its positive effect was maintained for three months.

Don't Give Up

These are just a few of the alternative therapies available to help you feel like yourself again. Chronic pain is complex and multilayered. You may need to try a variety of approaches to relieve your lower back pain before making the ultimate decision to have back surgery. Don't give up. The lifestyle modifications, along with a few of the alternative therapies given here, will greatly enhance your overall well-being, your mind and ultimately, your ailing lower back. To determine if the treatment is covered, please consult BCBSIL for more information and your Primary Care Physician (PCP) for a referral.

* The following services are eligible under the BCBSIL HMO/PPO plans.

• Acupuncture • Biofeedback • Spinal Manipulation • Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation

** High Intensity Laser Treatment may be eligible for coverage under your medical plan. PPO members, if this is a treatment you are interested in receiving, your provider may contact BCBSIL to verify coverage. HMO members, an approved referral is required from your PCP to receive the services.



Pick.



Click.



Enroll.

2023 Benefits Open Enrollment Is Coming!

October 11-31, 2022

Open Enrollment Pro Tip 1!

If I'm adding a dependent, what will I need?

The first time you enroll new dependents in the County's benefits through Employee Self Service (ESS) you will be asked to provide information about your eligible dependents such as name, date of birth, Social Security number. You will also be required to upload documentation of the dependent's relationship to you such as a government-issued birth certificate or marriage certificate.

Don't forget October 11-31 to Pick.Click.Enroll!

