

Children With Low Back Pain Become Adults With Low Back Pain

Parents are frequently surprised when I tell them that their children may need treatment for their backs. After all, back pain is an “adult disease.” Yet, two studies clearly show that back pain is far more common in children than we once thought.

A recent study found that 14-year-olds with low back pain (LBP) were 40% more likely to experience LBP as adults than children who never experienced LBP. The adults experiencing LBP as children were also more likely to have been hospitalized and to have lost time from work because of LBP.

A Scandinavian study found that over 73 percent of children had experienced back pain at least once. The authors found seven variables that were important for causing back pain in children: 1) The older they are the greater the occurrence of back pain. 2) A previous back injury increased the risk. 3) Carrying a backpack by hand or over their shoulder was more damaging than carrying it on their back. 4) 83% of children who smoked had back pain. 5) Spending more than 1 hour a day watching television. 6) Volleyball players, and 7) Females had a greater risk.

Children are injured frequently. They may cry for a few minutes and then feel better after a kiss and a Band-Aid. Fortunately, kids have a wonderful ability to adapt to and heal from their injuries. As age and lifestyle changes occur, more attention to these conditions is warranted. The notion that adults begin their journey toward back problems in childhood is new for many parents. Save your child years of misery, and listen closely to their complaints. Remember that a little prevention is definitely worth a pound of cure when it comes to your child’s back.

Yours in health,

Dr. Rick

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