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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Sick With Back Pain

Unfortunately, this has been, and may well continue to be, a bad year for cold and flu “bugs”. Very few of us will go unscathed this year when it comes to sniffing, sneezing, coughing, and perhaps even vomiting. For many, it also means a few days of very limited physical activity. Particularly for those who had mild low back stiffness prior to becoming sick, a few days of lying in bed or on the couch can make your low back very prone to acute exacerbations of pain.

Whenever an already “stiff” area of your spine is immobilized for a few consecutive days, it may become that much tighter. In fact, this could occur without any significant painful symptoms. But then, when you make even a simple bending or twisting movement while the joints in your spine are already vulnerable, they can become acutely inflamed. As well, did you know that forceful coughing and sneezing could dramatically increase the “pressure” on your low back? If the pressure of a cough or sneeze occurs while your back is bent forward or twisted, an acute sprain of the joints in the low back can occur. The same scenario could occur if you are unfortunate enough to be bent over the toilet vomiting. Regardless of what is causing you to “throw up”, this bodily function creates a large pressure on your low back from strongly contracting abdominal muscles.

If you are unlucky enough to become sick this winter and it has possibly contributed to the presence of a low back problem, there is hope for you yet. If you allow your immune system to do its job of fighting off the infection, the cold or flu will eventually subside. In regards to the back pain, you have to restore and maintain the proper mobility of the stiff and tight joints. The best way to do this is to combine chiropractic care with a gradually increasing exercise routine. Only then will the joints of your spine be able to heal themselves naturally and completely. It is also a good idea to regularly stretch your low back during the days you are immobilized on the couch hugging your garbage can or Kleenex box. Some examples are shown in the “free stretches and exercises” section of our website (www.merrittchiro.com).

