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

Obesity and Back Pain

According to the American Obesity Association 64.5 percent of the general population are categorized as being overweight or obese. The unfortunate truth is that obesity is becoming a global epidemic affecting adults and children. Most people know that obesity contributes to the development of coronary heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and colon cancer. However, did you know that obesity is a contributing factor to back pain?

Patients who are overweight or obese and suffer from back pain may not be aware that their excess weight is actually contributing to their back pain. While it has not been thoroughly studied exactly how excess weight can cause or contribute to back pain, it is known that people who are overweight often are at greater risk for back pain, joint pain and muscle strain than those who are not obese. In addition to back pain, symptoms exhibited by persons who are obese or severely overweight may include fatigue, as well as difficulty breathing and shortness of breath during even short periods of exercise. If the fatigue and shortness of breath causes one to avoid activity and exercise, then this can indirectly lead to back pain as lack of exercise contributes to many common forms of back pain.

For people who are overweight, attention to overall weight loss is important as every pound adds strain to the muscles and ligaments in the back. In order to compensate for extra weight, the spine can become tilted and stressed unevenly. For example, excess weight in one's stomach pulls the pelvis forward and strains the lower back, creating lower back pain. As a result, over time, the back may lose its proper support and an unnatural curvature of the spine may develop.

Finally, obese or overweight patients may experience sciatica and low back pain from a herniated disc. This occurs when discs and other spinal structures are damaged from having to compensate for the pressure of extra weight on the back.

Basically, if you are overweight, it is very important to make the necessary lifestyle changes that will allow you to lose the extra pounds. Not only will you live a longer and healthier life, but the chance of you suffering from low back pain significantly lessens. If

you combine regular chiropractic care with your loss of weight, the results are even more positive.