

Contact us

Children's Physiotherapy Direct

Tel: **0300 421 6980**

www.ghc.nhs.uk

0-16 years (or 16-18 in full-time education).

Open Mon-Fri (excluding bank holidays) 9am-12pm.

Your views are important to us. If you need advice or have feedback on a community hospital in Gloucestershire, or on our community health and adult social care services, you can contact one of the advisers from our Service Experience team.

All enquiries are completely confidential. You can contact us between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

This leaflet can also be supplied in braille, audio format, PDF, large print, easy read and other languages on request.

Telephone: **0300 421 8313** (answerphone available outside office hours)

Email: **experience@ghc.nhs.uk**

Write to: **Patient and Carer Experience Team,
Gloucestershire Health and Care
NHS Foundation Trust, Edward Jenner
Court, 1010 Pioneer Avenue, Gloucester
Business Park, Brockworth,
Gloucester GL3 4AW**



**Gloucestershire
Health and Care**
NHS Foundation Trust

Back Pain in Children and Young people



Information for patients

Back pain in children and young people

Back pain is common in children and young people and studies have shown that back pain affects over half of all children in primary and secondary school at some time.

Pain in the muscles, ligaments and small joints is a sign that your child's back is not working as it should. Back pain can be frightening for children and you may worry that it is something serious.

The good news is that the back is very strong and by making small changes in posture and lifestyle, you can often improve back pain.

The facts

- Good posture helps prevent back pain.
- 3 in 5 children spend more than 25 hours a week slouched in front of the TV or playing computer games.
- Children spend 30% of their time sitting in school on poor seating and carrying heavy school bags.
- Backs are designed to move so it makes sense that movement and exercise help ease back pain.
- Less active lifestyles and increasing levels of obesity can cause many problems including back pain.
- Back pain is not normally due to serious disease.

Preventing pain

Active children develop better muscle strength. Strong back and stomach muscles help support a good posture and healthy back.

Most movement and sport is good for backs and it is recommended that children exercise for one hour each day.

When your child's back is painful, encourage them to keep moving and try to gently continue with activities such as walking, swimming, cycling and dancing.

Always encourage your child to stand, sit and lie down with a good posture, by maintaining the back's natural curves.

When doing homework, they should sit in a supportive chair, with their feet flat on the floor, and hips slightly higher than their knees. Computer screens should be at eye level.



It is also very important that your child takes regular breaks to get up move around and adjust their posture.

Travel light! School bags should not weigh more than 5-10% of your child's body weight. If possible give them a rucksack with straps on each shoulder to spread the load.



Tips to ease pain

- Applying heat and cold packs can help.
- Encourage your child to keep moving and to avoid staying in one position for too long.
- Encourage your child to maintain a good posture.
- Ask your pharmacist for advice on simple pain relief and dosage for your child.
- If the pain does not settle or is associated with other symptoms, seek advice from your GP or call Children's Physiotherapy Direct.