

Health matters

Cheltenham Imaging Centre

This week is Back Care Week.

DONALD AINSCOW

Consultant Orthopaedic and Spinal Surgeon from the Cheltenham Spine Clinic at Linton House, discusses the importance of caring for your back and diagnosing and treating ongoing problems

BACK pain affects millions of people and is the leading cause of disability in the UK and whether the pain is mild or intense, it can stop you from enjoying normal daily life. Estimations suggest that four out of every five adults will experience back pain at some stage.

The lower back, providing strength, support and mobility is made up of five lumbar vertebrae: intervertebral discs, facet joints, ligaments, supporting muscles and structures, and the sacrum/pelvis. Good functioning of your lower back is required for almost all normal activities and keeping physically active, strengthening back muscles and remaining at a healthy weight can all help to avoid problems developing.

Low back pain may be commonly caused by a muscular sprain or strain, wear and tear (degeneration), stenosis or a 'slipped'/ prolapsed disc. Some of these conditions may result in a trapped or pinched nerve, causing sciatica - where pain radiates down through the buttock, thigh, calf or foot depending on which nerve is irritated.

Understandably people with ongoing low back pain want to know what is causing it - to get the best treatment it is important to first know the origin. See a health care professional for a comprehensive consultation and examination. Investigations may include X-rays, CT scans or MRI scans which help achieve an accurate diagnosis of spinal disorders. Spine patients sometimes require surgery but often conservative treatment and appropriate advice is all that is needed.

The Cheltenham Spine Clinic offers a 'one-stop service' including a comprehensive consultation, examinations with the Spinal Specialist and if required immediate access to the advanced Highfield Open MRI, 3T MRI and 1.5 Achieva MRI scanners as well as X-ray and CT imaging, all in one visit. After any investigations the Spinal Specialist will talk through your results and discuss the most appropriate management or treatment for your condition.



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For more information call 01242 535908 or visit www.cheltenhamimaging.co.uk, or pop into Linton House Clinic, Thirlestaine Road.

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