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## Back Pain Exam

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Back pain is the 2nd most common reason a person seeks medical care. Upper respiratory infection is the most common. It's estimated that more than \$80 billion is spent each year because of back pain, and the cost is growing. In fact, eight out of 10 people will suffer from some form of back pain at some time during their lives. Although back pain is more likely to occur between the ages of 30 and 50, it can happen to you at any age.

If you have back pain, you may need to have a back pain exam. The first step in your exam is to provide your doctor with a complete history of your back problem. Next, your doctor will conduct a thorough physical examination. X-rays of your back may be ordered to evaluate the bony anatomy. They are usually the first step taken by your doctor during testing of any back problem, because they can help decide which other tests, if any, may be required. Other testing your doctor can use during your exam may include a MRI or "Magnetic Resonance Imaging," a CAT or "Computer Assisted Tomography" Scan, a Myelogram, a Discogram, and an Electromyogram. Since there are so many possible causes of back pain, blood tests are taken to look for infection or arthritis. Your doctor may also search for other sources of back pain located away from your spine, such as an aortic aneurysm, kidney problems, and stomach ulcers.