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## Howard Head Sports Medicine Clinic Locations

### Vail Valley

*Vail Valley Medical Center*  
181 West Meadow Drive  
Vail, CO 81657  
970-476-1225

*US Bank Clinic*  
108 South Frontage Road West  
Vail, CO 81657  
970-479-7291

*Beaver Creek Medical Center*  
1280 Village Road  
Avon, CO 81620  
970-949-5522

*Shaw Regional Cancer Center  
Edwards Medical Center  
Shaw Pavilion*  
322 Beard Creek Road  
Edwards, CO 81632  
970-569-7777

*Eagle Healthcare Clinic*  
0377 Sylvan Lake Road  
Eagle, CO 81631  
970-328-6715

*Gypsum Recreation Center*  
52 Lundgren Boulevard  
Gypsum, CO 81637  
970-777-2700

### Summit County

*Breckenridge Howard Head*  
655 S. Park Ave Plaza 1  
Breckenridge, CO 80424  
970-547-2763

*Frisco Howard Head*  
360 Peak One Drive  
Suite 370  
Frisco, CO 80443  
970-668-3169

*Keystone Medical Center*  
1252 County Road 8  
Keystone, CO 80435  
970-468-1787

*Silverthorne  
Howard Head Clinic*  
265 Tanglewook Lane  
Silverthorne, CO 80498  
970-262-0179

**N**early everyone at some point in their lives has back pain that interferes with work, routine daily activities, or recreation. According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders, Americans spend at least \$50 billion each year on low back pain, the most common cause of job-related disability and a leading contributor to missed work. Back pain is the second most common neurological ailment in the United States – only headache is more common. Fortunately, most occurrences of low back pain go away within a few days. For pain that persists for longer than a few days, most will respond very favorably to conservative management.

### Call Your Family Doctor If:

- Pain goes down your leg below your knee
- You experience unexplained weight loss
- Your leg, foot, groin or rectal area feels numb
- You have fever, nausea or vomiting, stomachache, weakness or sweating
- You lose control over going to the bathroom
- Your pain was caused by an injury
- Your pain is so intense you can't move around
- Your pain doesn't seem to be getting better after 2 to 3 days



*A service of Vail Valley Medical Center*

[www.vvmc.com](http://www.vvmc.com)

MAILING ADDRESS:  
PO BOX 40,000  
VAIL, CO 81658



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## Low Back Pain Information and Remedies



## What Structures Make Up Your Low Back?

The spine is a complex structure made up of bones, muscles, ligaments and nervous tissue. The low back (or lumbar spine) is made up of five bones called vertebrae that form building blocks on the sacrum, which is a large triangle shaped bone at the base of the spine. The primary function of the vertebrae is to house and protect the spinal cord, which is the delicate structure responsible for carrying signals from the brain to the body and vice versa. The vertebrae are separated in the front by an intervertebral disc, which primarily acts as a shock absorber. The disc is made up of a jelly center (nucleus pulposus) which is enclosed in ligaments (annulus fibrosus) and resembles a jelly filled donut. The vertebrae are separated posteriorly (in the back) by a small joint called a facet joint. The nerves leave the spinal cord and exit the vertebrae through a small opening called the intervertebral foramin.

## What Causes Low Back Pain?

Low back pain can be caused by injury to any of the structures mentioned above, either muscle, joint, disc, ligament or nerve. This can occur as a result of traumatic injury, such as lifting a heavy object or falling, or can occur as a result of repetitive trauma, causing gradual breakdown of these structures. Other degenerative conditions such as arthritis, disc disease, osteoporosis, viral infections or congenital abnormalities can also gradually breakdown the spine, causing pain. Obesity, smoking, weight gain during pregnancy, stress, depression and poor physical condition can also

contribute to low back pain. Occasionally, low back pain may be a symptom of a more serious medical problem. Pain associated with fevers, general body aches and pains, unexplained weight loss, and loss of bowel or bladder control may indicate a more serious medical condition. You should contact your Doctor immediately if you suffer any of these symptoms.

## How Is Back Pain Treated?

Most low back pain can be treated conservatively (without surgery). Treatment involves using analgesics, reducing inflammation, restoring proper function and strength to the back, and preventing recurrence of the injury. Most patients with spine pain recover without residual functional loss. Patients should contact their physician if there is not a noticeable reduction in pain and inflammation after 72 hours of self-care.

- *Ice and heat for comfort.*

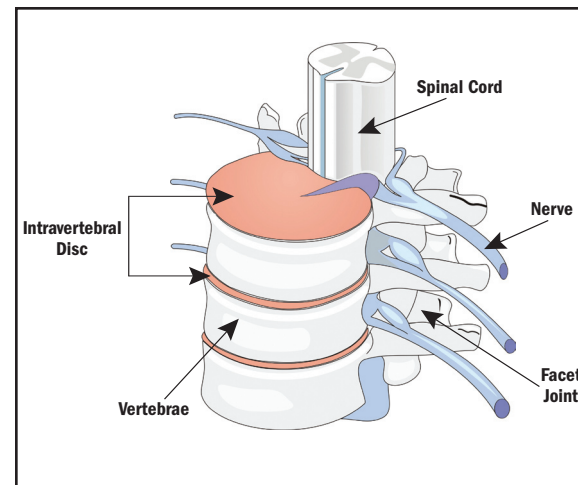
Ice is generally recommended for the first 48-72 hours to decrease inflammation and heat is generally recommended after this point.

- *Keep active!*

Do not rest in bed for any greater than 1-2 days. Research has shown that bed rest for any longer than this will actually make your condition worse. If you continue to experience high levels of pain that prevent you from moving after 2-3 days you must contact your physician.

- *Medication.*

Pain relief medications may be helpful in the treatment of acute or chronic spine pain. You should discuss this option with your physician.



- *Physical therapy.*

Research has shown that “hands on” treatment such as physical therapy can significantly hasten your recovery from acute and chronic bouts of low back pain. Physical Therapy treatment for spine pain involves a comprehensive physical examination to diagnose the structures at fault and highlight any areas of dysfunction. A physical therapist can provide “hands on” manual treatment and prescribe you a list of gentle exercises that help keep muscles functioning and speed the recovery process. Your physical therapist can also teach you how to rehabilitate your deep spinal muscles (core muscles). Further research has demonstrated that specific exercises for these muscles can decrease the likelihood of suffering a recurrence of low back pain in the future by up to 50%.