

# NOUVEL HAY MAGAZINE

## SANS FRONTIÈRES

## Le mal de dos est le mal le plus fréquent chez les patients qui viennent consulter leur médecin



Back pain is one of the most common problem health wise that people are facing. It is the second most common reason for a doctor's visit, behind only to the common cold. Billions of dollars are spent annually on treating back pain, which is also a very common cause of disability. More than 90% of people will experience an episode of debilitating back pain at some point in their lifetime.

While there are many causes of back pain, the most common cause is a disorder of the lumbar intervertebral discs. The spine is divided into three parts, and the lumbar spine is the lowest part of the spine. The intervertebral discs are shock absorbers, or spacers, that are located in the spine between the bones of the spine, called vertebrae which is why the discs are intervertebral. The makeup of a disc is similar to that of a jelly donut, in that it has a soft gel-like center called the nucleus pulposus, which has a very limited blood supply, and a thicker outer fibrous structure called the anulus fibrosis, which has sensitive nerves dispersed within it. The purpose of the disc is to allow movement and to provide shock absorbing capability. However, much like a jelly donut, if too much pressure is applied, the disc can bulge out of place or break apart. This is called a "herniation." As the herniation is the disc progresses, it loses its hydration leading to degenerative disc disease. The type of pain that people describe most frequently with degenerative disc disease is a dull ache with pressure across the low back, occasionally referred down to the tailbone area and up the back a little bit, and often across to both sides and even into the top part of the buttocks. Sometimes a dull aching feeling can even extend into the thighs. If there is leg pain coming from the discs, the leg pain should not be as intense as the back pain, and is unlikely to extend below the knees. One particularly stoic patient of mine described his back pain as a feeling of the back simply being "tired". Although less common, disc pain can be sharp, stabbing, lancinating, burning, and even more uncommonly associated with tingling and numbness.



	
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