

## **BACK SAFETY**

According to the CDC, musculoskeletal disorders such as back pain account for over 70 million physician office visits per year. It is the number one cause of absenteeism from work and one of the most expensive healthcare issues affecting patients over a lifetime.

Back pain can be acute as the result of an injury, or it can be chronic as a result of repetitive stress or untreated trauma. Read more for guidelines and tips on back safety for help navigating daily situations.

### **Lifting:**

- Before lifting, find firm handles and firm footing.
- Bend at the knees to lift with your back straight and head up.
- Never lift and twist – keep your feet and hips square.
- Tighten core muscles before lifting.
- Turn with your feet, not your torso.
- When transporting an object, hold it close to your body.

### **Sitting:**

- Choose active sitting over passive sitting – use an exercise ball or an ergonomic kneeling chair.
- Choose a chair with lumbar support to maintain the natural curve of the spine.
- Stand and stretch every 30 minutes to loosen joints and muscles.
- Try not to lean forward or backward at a desk.
- Tighten core muscles before getting up from a chair.

### **Walking:**

- Wear supportive, non-slip shoes for walking.
- Warm up before you walk, stretching leg muscles and ankles.
- Mind your gait to be sure you are walking across your foot bed evenly with equal weight from both legs.

### **Around the house:**

- Brace yourself when you feel a cough or sneeze coming on.
- Employ a small step for one foot while doing dishes to relieve pressure on your back.
- Use non-slip mats and treads in and out of the shower.
- Stand inside the shower to clean it.
- Minimize leaning: Fold laundry and wrap birthday and holiday gifts in a standing position at a high table, not on the floor.

- Use a stepladder to retrieve anything above eye level.