

## **Prepare ahead when traveling with back pain**

**Question:** I have severe lower-back pain and must travel by car for 8 hours to my nephews wedding. What suggestions can you make to reduce my discomfort during my trip?

**Answer:** Preparation prior to travel is the priority to minimize your low-back pain when driving or traveling in any fashion, especially long distance. Always have well documented travel arrangements with alternative routes to avoid extended delays that force you to be in a seated position longer than an hour at a time. Schedule extra time for your trip with periodic stops for stretching and decompression of your spine. Pack a cooler with ice or ice packs to apply every other hour for 20 minutes to reduce inflammation and irritation. When possible, stretch out in the vehicle you are traveling in. The accessibility of a larger bench type seat that can accommodate your entire body will allow you to take pressure off your spine and even perform stretching in your vehicle. When at a rest stop lie flat on your back on the ground or on a bench and extend your arms over your head. Attempt to lengthen your spine by pushing your feet down while simultaneously stretching your fingers as far over your head as possible therefore elongating your spine. There are many other functional stretches that are beneficial while stretching. Your chiropractor can give you a list of many helpful preventative and pain-reducing ideas.

While sitting in your vehicle, remember to keep your knees higher than your waist and maintain an upright position, avoiding slouching or leaning

backward. These uneven postures transfer weight bearing to your discs and although they feel good temporarily they can create even more discomfort when you attempt to stand.

Stop as often as every hour, get out of your vehicle, walk around for 10 minutes, do your stretches and enjoy the ride.

**Quote of the week:** *"A will finds a way."* — Orison Sweet Marden