

Hernia / Lower Back Pain

Information for VAG Leaders and health committees

VAG LEADER ACTIONS

- Have meetings with your VAG about Hernia. Use this Hernia fact sheet to facilitate and provide information to the participants as much possible through discussion.
- Prepare each VAG meeting properly. At the start of each fact sheet there is a list of preparations needed. Make sure you carry out these preparations.
- In other VAG meetings you can discuss other topics in the following order preferred by your VAG.
- If you wish, use the ' *key information*' in a VAG meeting to discuss all important issues regarding this topic once again. If possible copy this fact sheet and give a copy to each family in your VAG.
- Write down all actions (eg. how hernia can be prevented, how to support people with a hernia) proposed by the VAG members during the discussions and agree how they will be followed up and who will be responsible.
- Keep in touch with the health committees to know whether the situation has changed

HEALTH COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- Get data from the first aid, dispensary or nearby hospital to what extent hernia is a problem and for advise.
- If necessary develop plans for your community.
- Implement the plan together with VAG's, village leaders, etc.
- Evaluate the success of the project and further action needed.

PREPARATION FOR VAG'S

- Read this fact sheet; make sure you understand the questions, the information and the exercises.
- Make sure there is enough space to do the exercises.
- Ask the health committee where pain-relieving drugs are available and how much they cost.

Prevention and treatment

There are some things you can do to get rid off the pain:

- The best remedy is to keep moving around and continue with the daily activities. But with care. Good activities are walking around and cycling. Avoid positions and movements that cause much pain or strain your back too much. So, no lifting of heavy loads, or lifting your children or stay in one position for a long time. When you have to lift something, bent your knees before you pick it up.
- When you are lying down, choose the least painful position. Lie on your back with some cushions under your knees or sideways with your knees bent.
- When it is difficult to get out of bed then lay sideways, put the legs on the side of the bed and push yourself with your arms out of the bed.
- It is useful to use pain-relieving drugs when you have a hernia. The pain becomes less and you can move more freely. Use drugs like acetaminophen, paracetamol, or ibuprofen. Take them at fixed moments during the day.
- If the pain hasn't gone away after about six weeks, go to the doctor. Also go to him if your leg feels weakened or you get trouble peeing.
- Ask the community if they know of any local cures for pain in the back, for example local ointments such as Aloe Vera or herbs.

DO

- Keep moving
- Bent your knees when lifting things
- Use a pain-relieving drug
- Work on your physical condition
- Walk and sit straight

DON'T

- Stay in bed or keep sitting in a chair
- Stress your back
- Make unexpected movements.

EXERCISES

Ask a member or more members of the group who has pain in the lower back to come forward. Let him/her show where it hurts (also in the leg?). Ask if he/she knows when and where the pain started.

Explain the causes of this kind of pain and what can be done to prevent it.

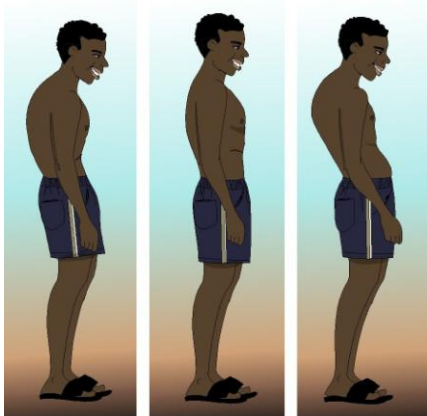
Then **show** the following exercises and tell them to do each of these exercises ten times and at least three times a day. Tell them to take a pain-relieving drug when the pain is too much. Also tell them where they can buy these drugs and how much they cost.

- Learn to sit active: sit straight, legs next to one another, look forward and drop the chin a little bit. Then strain the muscles in the stomach and the back by stretching them and pushing the hands firmly on the thighs. Relax.



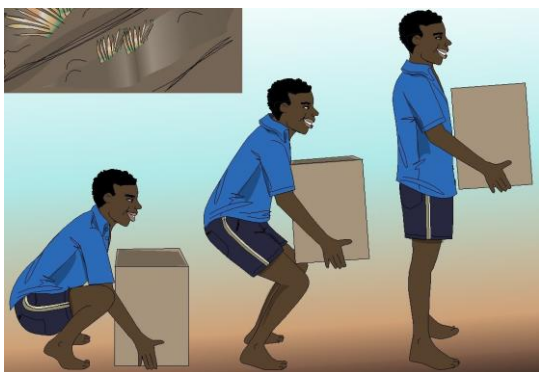
- Learn to stand straight: stand straight and tighten the muscles in the stomach and the back. Relax

Good and Poor Postures:



Poor Good Poor

- Learn to lift things properly: stand straight, bent the knees en bent forwards while keeping the torso straight. Arms point downwards. Keep the weight close to the body. Lift a light object from the ground by unbending the knees. Keep the back straight!



What do you see in these drawings?

Use the drawing to discuss some of the most important rules. They are important for preventing hernia. You can use the drawings to discuss freely about the things you see.

Key information

What is hernia?

- Hernia is a painful ache in the lower part of your back, between the lower ribs and the bottom. The pain can spread out to the legs and feet. Many people can get a hernia. It is mostly caused by weak muscles in the lower part of the back.
- Hernia can be caused by different activities. For example: carrying or lifting heavy loads, bending over too long, sitting too long in one position, not walking right, not enough physical exercise, overweight and smoking. Even sneezing can cause a hernia. Women have more chance of getting a hernia than men .



What are the symptoms of hernia?

- Pain in the back: it hurts when you move, you find it is difficult to stand up from a chair or come out of bed. Some people with a hernia can't move at all for some time.
- Pain in the leg, less strength in your leg or the feeling that your leg is sleeping.
- Explain that lower back aches/hernia can be the result of different causes. It is mostly caused by weak muscles in the lower part of the back and the pain occurs when carrying or lifting heavy loads, bending over too long, sitting too long in one position and coughing.
- Explain that there are several things that people can do to prevent getting pain in the back; such as bending the knees when lifting something heavy, not standing or sitting in one position too long. Most exercises are aimed at strengthening the lower back muscles.
- Tell them they should see a doctor when the pain hasn't gone away after about six weeks, or if their legs feel weakened or they get trouble peeing.

What to do

- Make sure the community understands the sources of hernia/lower back pain.
- List the problems that crops up from hernia in your community (eg. problems after delivery)
- Talk to village leaders on the need for the education to prevent hernia and measures that can prevent it.
- Plan for actions, e.g. buy equipment to help people carry heavy loads, let the people do the exercises to strengthen their back muscles.

CONCLUDING NOTES

- Remind the members about the action points they have decided on.
- Ask if there are any questions.
- Agree on the date, time, place and topic of the next meeting
- Close the meeting.