

# BACK PAIN

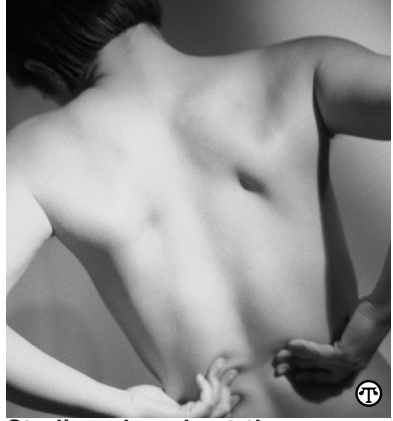
## Hot New Way To Treat An Old Problem

(NAPSA)—While scientists suspect humans have been suffering from back pain since learning to walk upright, doctors today have discovered a simple but effective way to relieve it.

The use of continuous low-level heat (36-40°C) therapy (CLHT) in a portable heat wrap significantly reduces acute low back pain and related disability of employees suffering from acute low back pain in the workplace, according to a Johns Hopkins School of Medicine study published in the December 2005 issue of *The Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.

“With recent concerns around the safety of oral pain medications, both patients and physicians are considering alternative treatment options for acute low back pain,” said Edward J. Bernacki, M.D., M.P.H., Associate Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and the study’s lead author. “There is substantial evidence to confirm that acute low back pain responds well to CLHT. The dramatic differences shown by workplace participants using CLHT shows that this therapy has clear benefits for low back pain and that it plays an important role in pain management.”

In the study, patients who visited an occupational injury clinic for low back pain either received education regarding back therapy and pain management alone or received the same education combined with three days of CLHT by wearing ThermaCare® HeatWraps for eight hours. The CLHT group experienced significant reduction in pain intensity and greater pain relief when compared to patients who only received pain education (reference group). Patients on CLHT showed a 107 percent pain intensity reduction and an 85 per-



**Studies show heat therapy can be a big help in besting back pain.**

cent improvement in pain relief within one day of treatment as compared to the reference group.

Low back pain is one of the most common and, therefore, costly medical problems in industrialized countries, according to Dr. Bernacki, who also directs the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine department of health, safety and the environment. Approximately half the working-age people in the United States suffer from acute low back pain every year and the estimated productivity loss comes to \$20 to \$50 billion annually.

Now, doctors and employers can confidently recommend CLHT for the relief of acute low back pain to their patients and employees, respectively. Like any heat treatment, CLHT therapy may not be appropriate for everyone. Individuals who have disease conditions that can compromise skin circulation (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, rheumatoid arthritis) should consult their physicians or health care provider prior to using CLHT for low back pain. You can learn more online at [www.thermacare.com](http://www.thermacare.com).