

## Back Pain Costs Employees R1.2 Billion A Year

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Employees taking sick days because of back pain cost companies R1.2 billion a year, a human resources company said on Monday.

"Factory workers who operate heavy machinery are the obvious candidates for back trouble, but office workers sitting on chairs that offer little support for hours every day, can also develop back problems," said Corporate Absenteeism Management Solutions (CAM) chief executive, Johnny Johnson.

He said back pain was the second leading cause of sick days and accounted for 6.4 percent of the total.

"Companies should realise how much of their absenteeism is caused by back trouble and perhaps look at ways to help employees strengthen their back muscles through exercises or provide them with the physical support via equipment," said Johnson.

The leading cause of absenteeism was influenza, which was reportedly responsible for 11.4 percent of all sick days.

Johnson said influenza as a cause for taking sick days was most prevalent from March through to November.

Gastro-enteritis was the third leading cause of absenteeism, with this being the reason for 4.6 percent of the sick days taken.

CAM Solutions said it surveyed over 150,000 incidents of sick leave from employees working for over 60 companies.

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