



Creatine and Your Spine: What the Evidence Shows

One-page summary of the full Spinemathema guide. Scan the QR code for the full guide, with references and audio.

Key points

- Creatine is a natural substance made by the body and found in meat and fish. Muscles use it for short bursts of effort.
- In older adults, creatine taken alongside strength training led to slightly bigger gains in muscle mass and strength than strength training alone in several pooled analyses. The gains are small, and the exercise does most of the work.
- On its own, without exercise, creatine did not improve muscle or bone in a two-year trial in older women.
- Large trials have not shown that creatine improves bone density.
- We could find no trials of creatine for back pain or for recovery after spine surgery. Trials after knee surgery found no benefit.
- In healthy adults, trials have not shown kidney harm, but creatine can raise a blood test used to check the kidneys. If you have kidney disease, are pregnant or take regular medicines, speak to your GP or pharmacist first.

Call 999 or go to A&E if you have back pain and:

- pain, tingling, weakness or numbness in both legs
- a loss of feeling around your genitals or anus
- changes in your bladder or bowels, such as difficulty peeing, or peeing or pooing yourself
- changes in how your penis or vagina feels during sex, not being able to get or keep an erection, or not being able to orgasm
- chest pain
- it started after a serious accident, such as a car accident

Not sure how urgent it is? Call NHS 111. More warning signs: spinemathema.com/warning-signs

Last checked: October 2026

General information only, not personal medical advice.

If you are worried about your symptoms, contact your GP, NHS 111, or in an emergency call 999.

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