

HealthyYou



Live a healthier lifestyle

bcbsks.com Fall 2016

BACK PAIN? TRY THESE TIPS *for pain relief*

Does your lower back hurt? You probably don't need an MRI, CT scan or X-ray before you give your back time to heal on its own.

HERE'S WHY:

- They won't help you feel better any faster.
- They have risks, including exposure to radiation.
- They are expensive.

What can you do to feel better? Most people can heal from low back pain in a few weeks by trying these steps:

1. Stay active and walk.
2. Use heat or ice.
3. Take nonprescription pain relievers like Tylenol, Advil or Aleve.
4. Sleep on your side or your back, with a pillow between or under your knees.
5. Consider chiropractic care, physical therapy, massage or yoga.

There are still times when you might need an imaging test. Talk with your doctor about your symptoms to find out if you need imaging tests, or if you can wait to see if you just get better with time.

Source:

ConsumerHealthChoices.org/BackPain



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6 ways to fend off overeating

Whether it's game days on a Sunday afternoon or a family feast for the holidays, eating too much food can lead to weight gain and poorer health. Instead, take steps to eat better this holiday season. Here are some simple strategies you can employ to help:

1 It's OK to spoil your dinner. Eating before dinner may have been a no-no growing up, but eating a small snack between meals can help you avoid hunger. Being famished often leads to overeating. If you do choose to snack, make sure it's a healthy option such as a piece of fruit or small salad.

2 Pick healthy foods. At holiday feasts there is an abundance of delicious options available. For the best choices, go for lean meats, such as turkey. Load up on vegetables and fruits. Limit butter and high-fat salad dressings and gravies.

3 Stick to small portions. It's easy to overeat when the table is full of delicious options. To curb temptation make up individual plates in the kitchen and avoid serving dishes from the table.

4 Savor each bite. Quickly clearing your plate can make you miss your body's cue that you're full. Enjoy conversation with your family and friends so that you're talking more rather than eating more.

5 Pass on alcoholic drinks. Alcohol won't make you feel full, but it may lower your willpower to stop eating. Don't forget, those drinks have calories, too.

6 Get moving. To maintain a healthy weight you need to lead an active lifestyle. After large meals make sure you don't skip exercise that day. Or find another activity you can do to stay active, such as a long walk or a family game of touch football.

YOUR BONE HEALTH IS A VITAL PART OF YOUR OVERALL HEALTH.

Your bones allow you to move and function, they store nutrients and they protect your organs. It is important to eat a healthy diet rich in calcium and vitamin D to protect your bones. Like muscles, bones become stronger with exercise. The best exercises for bone health are weight-training and weight-bearing activities, such as walking, hiking and dancing.

Help us *to help you*



Mike Atwood,
M.D., VP, Medical
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Medical Officer,
BCBSKS

Ready to get moving?

Does your job cause you to sit for much of the day? Regular prolonged sitting is known to increase your risk for early death. Recent analysis of data showed that by moving more you can reduce the negative effects of prolonged sitting.

Studies show that even for those who regularly sit much of the day, the harmful effects from sitting were reduced by physical activity. An hour of exercise a day was shown to offset the increased risks of prolonged sitting. More importantly, any regular activity helped reduce the risks associated with sitting.

Experts recommend that we get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days each week. Ideally we can make time to do 30 minutes in one session, but taking shorter walks throughout the day still has real benefits. Taking five minutes each hour to walk the stairs or around your office does make a difference. Why not start today?

Are you taking care of your parents' affairs? Perhaps you have some questions about your child's medical bills while she is away at college. Or you need to take care of something for your spouse. Whatever the case may be, our customer service representatives cannot discuss personal health information for anyone older than 18 without a current signed authorization form or valid durable power of attorney, due to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) privacy laws. You can access the form by going to bcbsks.com, clicking "Members" and then selecting "Forms."

The Authorization for Release of Protected Health Information (HIPAA) form is located under "Miscellaneous Forms." Your spouse, child older than age 18 or parent needs to complete this form before you are able to obtain any of their information. If you think that you need to make changes to their policies, you will need to have them send a valid durable power of attorney to our office. If you need information about their accounts before customer service receives the proper paperwork, your loved one may give verbal approval on the phone. The verbal authorization must be given for each phone call until the paperwork is received.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

As a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas member, you have certain rights and responsibilities. You can find them listed on our website at bcbsks.com/help/member-rights-and-responsibilities.htm.



YOUR REFERENCE GUIDE FOR PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

Birth to 18 months	19 Months to 6 Years	7 Years to 12 Years	13 Years to 18 Years	19 Years to 49 Years	50 Years to 64 Years
Periodic health exams Eight exams in first 18 months	Periodic health exams Every one to two years	Periodic health exams Every one to three years	Periodic health exams Every one to two years	Periodic health exams Men: Every one to five years Women: Every one to three years	Periodic health exams Every one to two years
History Perinatal hearing Newborn screening (state lab) Update and system review Lead exposure (yearly) Allergies Medications Development Current problems Nutrition	History Update and system review Lead exposure (each visit to age 6) Allergy update Medications Development Current problems Nutrition	History Update and system review Allergy update Medications Development Current problems Nutrition	History Update and system review Allergy update Tobacco/alcohol history Medications Development Current problems Nutrition	History Update and system review Allergy update Tobacco/alcohol history Medications Current problems	History Update and system review Allergy update Tobacco/alcohol history Medications Current problems
Physical exam Height Weight Head circumference Physical examination	Physical exam Height Weight BMI Blood pressure (age 3 years and up) Physical examination	Physical exam Height Weight BMI Blood pressure Physical examination	Physical exam Height Weight BMI Blood pressure Physical examination	Physical exam Blood pressure and pulse Height Weight BMI Head and neck Heart Lungs Abdomen Pap smear (cervix present) and clinical breast exam	Physical exam Blood pressure and pulse Height Weight BMI Head and neck Heart Lungs Abdomen Pap smear (cervix present) and clinical breast exam
Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)
Lab As indicated by Bright Futures (brightfutures.aap.org)	Lab As indicated by Bright Futures (brightfutures.aap.org)	Lab As indicated by Bright Futures (brightfutures.aap.org)	Lab As indicated by Bright Futures (brightfutures.aap.org)	Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)
Developmental assessment	Developmental assessment	Developmental assessment	Developmental assessment	Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	Immunizations (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)
Counseling—parent and patient Diet Injury prevention Behavior Dental health	Counseling—parent and patient Diet and exercise Injury prevention Behavior Dental health	Counseling—parent and patient Substance use Diet and exercise Injury prevention Behavior Dental health Sexual behavior Mental health	Counseling—patient and/or parent Substance use Diet and exercise Injury prevention Behavior Dental health Sexual behavior Mental health	Lab As indicated by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org) or the Health Resources and Services Administration (hrsa.gov/womensguidelines)	Lab As indicated by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org) or the Health Resources and Services Administration (hrsa.gov/womensguidelines)
				Counseling Substance use Diet and exercise Injury prevention Dental health Sexual behavior Mental health	Counseling Substance use Diet and exercise Injury prevention Dental health Sexual behavior Mental health



Healthy people without symptoms may require more testing if risk factors are present.

This guide is based on published literature by nationally recognized authorities in health care and the expressed opinions of participating network physicians. This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be interpreted as medical advice or as a listing of preventive services with no cost sharing as required under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Please consult your doctor for advice about changes that may affect your health. Some services may not be covered under your health plan. Please refer to your benefit plan document for details concerning benefits, procedures and exclusions. If you are 65 or older, please talk with your physician about recommended screenings.



Want to know about *those 10,000 steps?*

Whether you clip on an old-fashioned pedometer or get wired with a high-tech tracker, you've probably heard the advice to aim for 10,000 steps per day. Indeed, that's what the government recommends for healthy adults. But what does this number mean—and does it apply to everyone? Here's the scoop on those 10K strides.

1. THEY'LL TAKE YOU FIVE MILES—AND TOWARD BETTER HEALTH.

On average, 2,000 steps equals a mile. So take 10,000 and you'll stride five miles. Do that for seven days and you'll burn an estimated 3,500 calories, or about a pound of fat. Besides a smaller waistline, you also may find yourself marching toward a better mood, lower blood pressure and a reduced risk for chronic health problems.

2. YOU SHOULDN'T GO FROM ZERO TO 10,000.

First, use a step tracker for a few days without trying to change anything. This gives you a baseline for your fitness. If you currently take 5,000 or fewer steps a day, aim to increase by about 3,000 at most. Start by just walking 10 minutes at a time. As the weeks and months go by, stay active for longer each time and be active more often.

3. LESS CAN STILL HELP.

Though 10,000 steps ensures you meet the government-recommended guidelines for physical activity, it isn't an all-or-nothing proposition. If you hit close to 8,000, you're

probably nearly on target. In one study, 5,000 steps or more improved sleep quality, and 7,500 reduced the risk for obesity.

4. A HIGH GOAL CAN PAY OFF, EVEN IF YOU DON'T REACH IT.

Once you reach 10,000, you can aim for 15,000 steps per day, which classifies you as highly active. You'll reap even more health benefits, from weight loss, to a reduced risk for cancer, to a longer life.

Don't sweat it if you're a few steps off. According to a study in the journal *Clinical Rehabilitation*, people who aim for more steps tend to walk more than those with lower goals, even when they fall short of their target.

5. WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS YOU'RE OVERDOING IT.

Though they're helpful for your health, those 10,000 steps add up to major pressure on your feet. Wear sturdy, well-fitting shoes to protect them. If you develop signs of foot problems—such as ongoing pain, discoloration or swelling—see your doctor or a podiatrist for help.



Don't get *scammed*

Fortunately, most health care providers are **honest** when it comes to billing for medical services.

Even so, a small percentage of dishonest medical professionals and scam artists use your information to submit false claims to health insurance companies for personal gain. In fact, the U.S. Government Accountability Office estimates billions of dollars are lost to fraud in this way every year in America.

Learning about medical fraud can help you protect yourself from becoming a victim.

HEALTH CARE FRAUD CAN OCCUR WHEN:

- People are given fake diagnostic tests at shopping malls.
- Fake companies contact older adults pretending to be representatives of Medicare.

MEDICAL IDENTITY THEFT

This kind of health care fraud is one of the fastest-growing forms of identity theft. It takes place when someone steals your Social Security identification number. With your personal information in hand, the person then buys medications, receives medical care or submits fraudulent bills to your health insurance company under your name and number.

To keep this from occurring, closely protect your personal information by never releasing it to providers you don't know or to anyone on the phone. You also should carefully review Explanations of Benefits from your health insurance company and credit card and bank statements.

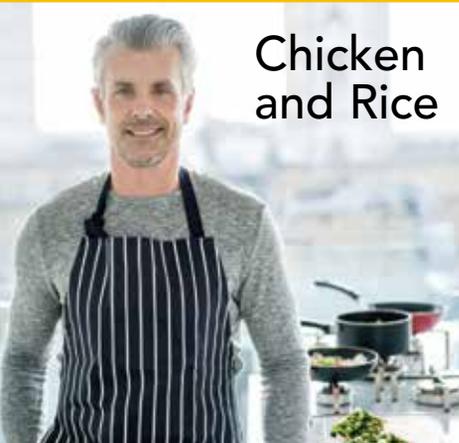
FIGHT BACK

These additional strategies can help protect you from this type of fraud:

- Don't sign blank insurance forms.
- Review all correspondence from your health insurance company.
- Show your health insurance card only to health care professionals who have seen you and provided care.

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, contact your local police or health insurance company.

! Do not pay your premium, provide your member ID number or share any other sensitive information to someone who calls you out of the blue. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas does not make unsolicited calls.



Chicken and Rice

- 1 c. onions, chopped
- ¾ c. green peppers, diced
- 2 tsp. vegetable oil
- 1 c. tomato sauce
- 1 tbsp. parsley, chopped
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 1½ tsp. garlic, minced
- 5 c. cooked brown rice
(about 3 c. uncooked)
- 1½ lb. boneless chicken
breast, diced
and cooked

1. In a large skillet, sauté onions and green peppers in oil for 5 minutes on medium heat.
2. Add tomato sauce and spices. Heat through.
3. Add rice and chicken and heat through.

Yield: 5 servings
Serving size: 1½ cups
Each serving provides:
Calories: 406, Total fat: 6 g, Saturated fat: 2 g,
Cholesterol: 75 mg, Sodium: 367 mg
Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute/
National Institutes of Health

5 things you should know *before you go sugar-free*

Obesity. Diabetes. A condition called metabolic syndrome, a condition that threatens your heart.

By now, you know sugar stands at the root of all these health evils. Can you solve these problems—and satisfy your sweet tooth—by ripping open a pink, yellow or blue packet instead?

It's true that many stand-ins for sugar have few or no calories. They might even help you reach your weight-loss goals or control your blood sugar if you have diabetes. But there is more you should understand before you swap them in for the real deal.

1. THEY'RE EVEN SWEETER THAN SUGAR.

Recipes with artificial sweeteners or other sugar substitutes usually call for less of these ingredients than those featuring sugar. That's because these sweeteners are often much more intense.

For instance, aspartame—sold as Equal or NutraSweet—tastes about 200 times sweeter than sugar. A brand-new sweetener with no brand name, advantame, provides 20,000 times the sweet flavor.

2. SCIENTISTS DON'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS ABOUT THEIR LONG-TERM EFFECTS.

The lack of calories, researchers say, doesn't mean these products have no effect on your body. That's especially true when you use them every day for a lifetime.

For instance, some studies suggest sugar substitutes change your blood sugar or insulin levels when you do eat sugar later. This kind of reaction also could lead to health problems down the line. In fact, one study linked diet soda to an increased risk for diabetes.

3. THEY DON'T CAUSE CANCER, ACCORDING TO HEALTH EXPERTS.

Big health scares linked to sweeteners haven't panned out. For instance, studies on rats raised a red flag about sweeteners and bladder cancer in the 1970s. Further research showed no such effects in humans.

The Food and Drug Administration has ruled low- and no-cal sweeteners now on the market safe at certain levels. You would need to consume a huge amount to face serious health risks. For instance, adults can safely drink 17 cans of soda containing aspartame or eat 8.6 packs of saccharin daily without adverse health effects (though it isn't recommended).

4. THEY MIGHT SEND YOU TO THE BATHROOM MORE OFTEN.

Some sugar substitutes cause diarrhea or other tummy troubles. Sweeteners called sugar alcohols—which have names like sorbitol and xylitol, and are often used in gum, candy and ice cream—seem to be the biggest culprits.

5. THE BOTTOM LINE: 'SUGAR-FREE' DOESN'T MEAN 'GOOD FOR YOU.'

Don't simply view diet foods as “free foods.” If you're using sugar substitutes to lose weight, read labels carefully. Many low- or no-sugar products still have a substantial number of calories. They sometimes contain more saturated or trans fats than the regular versions.

The best way to lose weight and improve health? Eat fewer foods like cookies and cakes and drink less soda, regardless of the sweetener type. Amp up your diet with nutrient-rich fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and fill your glass with good old water.





Beware of cyberbullying

Fifteen percent of high school students experience cyberbullying every year, according to research from the CDC.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over electronic technology and can include mean text messages, rumors or embarrassing photos or videos posted on social media.

To protect your kids from cyberbullying, follow these steps:

- Be aware of what your kids are doing online and talk with them about it.
- Establish rules about their use of technology.
- Learn their school's policy on cyberbullying.

About 3,500 U.S. infants die suddenly and unexpectedly each year. To prevent sudden infant death syndrome, the CDC recommends that parents:

- Place babies on their backs every time they sleep, including all naps.
- Babies should sleep in their own beds, not adults' beds.
- Cribs should have firm mattresses and fitted sheets.
- Keep stuffed animals and loose bedding out of the sleeping area.



IMMUNIZATIONS AREN'T JUST FOR BABIES AND KIDS

According to the CDC, vaccine-preventable diseases are more common in adults than children. In 2014, only 20 percent of adults were up-to-date on their Tdap vaccine. Talk with your doctor about whether you and your family members are current on your immunizations.

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