



**WELLNESS NEWSLETTER**  
**APRIL 2023**

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## HIGHLIGHTS for the [April 2023 Newsletter](#)

### **Live Longer: Do THIS for Just 11 Minutes a Day**

Do you want to live longer and enjoy life as you age? There's no magic pill for that, but there is something simple you can do that only takes 11 minutes a day. Say goodbye to excuses, and put THIS on your daily to-do list.

### **Get Your Zzzs to Prevent 'The Munchie Effect'**

Ever find yourself craving junk food throughout the day or chowing down in the evening? It might have everything to do with what you're doing or not doing at night. If you want to avoid 'The Munchie Effect,' here's what you need to know.

### **Texting While Walking: You Need to See This**

Did you know pedestrian deaths reached an all-time high last year? Texting while walking may seem harmless enough. But if you're staring down at your phone with your thumbs moving rapidly across the screen, you're not paying attention to what's in front of you. Here's a few tips to help you pay attention.

### **Y-Axis: Forget About the Five-Second Rule**

All this time, you thought the five-second rule was fine. You know...if you drop food on the ground, it's still good to eat if you act fast. Researchers just put this to the test 2,650 times, and what they found might surprise you.

### **Recipe: Easy & Healthy Black Bean Soup**

Beans, beans, the magical art...Ahem, you know the rest of that rhyme. But seriously, beans are good for you. They're actually low in calories and a great source of fiber. Give this black bean recipe a try.

### **Take the April Health Challenge!**

Protect Your Back: Practice healthy-back habits

### **Ask the Wellness Doctor:**

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: How can I reduce sodium in my diet?



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THE Y AXIS



### Forget About the Five-Second Rule

That's right. The next time something tasty hits the ground. Throw it away.



"But it's perfectly fine." "There's nothing wrong with it."

Try to tell that to Rutgers University researchers who disproved the five-second rule 2,560 times.<sup>4</sup>

They dropped watermelon, bread, and gummy candy on dirty surfaces.

In less than one second, some foods were already covered in germs that could make you sick. Moist foods were the worst. And foods dropped on carpet only fared slightly better than foods dropped on hard surfaces.

Here's a new 5-second rule to follow. When food hits the floor, count to five. Then pick it up and throw it away.

### COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

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## Live Longer: Do THIS for Just 11 Minutes a Day

Study: 11 minutes of exercise lowers risk of early death

Want to live longer, lower your risk for early death and prevent chronic disease?

That's a no brainer, right? But how? Eating mountains of fruits and vegetables, running a marathon every day, and never touching dessert again? Nope.

Smart food choices and regular exercise will improve your health. But if that feels like a long way from where you're at, you might think, "What's the point? It's just too hard."

It doesn't have to be. A new study of more than 30 million people looked at exercise habits compared to early death and chronic disease.

Researchers found that just 11 minutes of moderate exercise a day:

- Lowered the risk of early death by 25%
- Reduced heart disease by 17%
- Cut the risk of all cancers by 7%

### So what does moderate exercise look like?

If you want to improve your health and live longer, 11 minutes of moderate exercise a day is a good place to start. Any activity that elevates your heart rate and makes you breathe a little faster for 11 minutes counts, like:

- Walking
- Biking
- Dancing
- Playing a sport
- Hiking

Even yard work, washing the car, cleaning the house, or playing with your kids can elevate your heart rate and protect your health.

Carve out time for 11 minutes of moderate exercise a day. Then work up to 30 minutes a day. You'll feel better and live longer.

### MORE

21 ways to be active  
<https://tinyurl.com/2kswpper>

## Get Your Zzzs to Prevent 'The Munchie Effect'

Lack of sleep increases junk food cravings

Ever find yourself feeling drawn to eating donuts, fries, cookies or pizza? You know, like some mysterious force is practically controlling your mind and your mouth, whispering, "Eat this, not that. You know you want it."

Chances are pretty good, it's not the mysterious force. It's your brain trying to make sense of hunger, appetite, and food choices when it's sleep deprived.

In a recent study, researchers found that lack of sleep elevates your sense of smell and interrupts communication in the brain.<sup>2</sup> The result: You're hypersensitive to high-calorie foods that smell good. It's unofficially called "The Munchie Effect."

"We found participants changed their food choices," says Northwestern University professor



Dr. Thorsten Kahnt, who was part of the research team. "After being sleep deprived, they ate food with higher energy density (more calories per gram) like doughnuts, chocolate chip cookies and potato chips."

The good news: Improving your sleep habits can also help you make better food choices.



### Easy & Healthy Black Bean Soup

Beans, beans, the magical art...Ahem, you know the rest of that rhyme. But seriously, beans are good for you. They're actually low in calories and a great source of fiber. Give this black bean recipe a try:<sup>5</sup>

#### Ingredients

- 2-15 oz cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 C low-sodium broth
- 1 C salsa (mild, medium, or hot)
- 1 tsp cumin, ground
- 4 T sour cream, fat-free
- 2 T fresh cilantro, chopped

#### Directions

1. In a blender, lightly puree one can of black beans with broth, salsa, and cumin.
2. In a medium saucepan, combine pureed bean mixture with remaining beans and heat through.
3. Makes about 4 bowls.
4. Top each bowl with 1 T of sour cream. Garnish with the cilantro.

Serves 4. 342 calories per serving.

## Texting While Walking? You Need to See This

### Distracted walking linked to rise in pedestrian deaths



Go for a walk. That sounds like a good activity to stretch your legs, burn some calories, maybe even get some fresh air. Right?

#### But what if you're texting while walking?

Imagine this. You're walking along, staring down at your phone. You're laughing and smiling at a text message, meme or social media post.

Your fingers move quickly across the screen. Tap, tap. Swipe, swipe. And all of the sudden, Bam!

- You run into a light pole.
- A car honks while you mindlessly cross the street without looking.
- You fall headfirst into a fountain (yes, it's actually happened).
- Or worse.

Last year, pedestrian deaths reached an all-time high, according to a report published by the Governor's Highway Safety Association. An

estimated 7,500 pedestrians were killed (nearly 20 per day). Growing cellphone use by drivers *and* walkers may be to blame.

#### The trouble with texting while walking

An estimated 1 in 5 pedestrians is distracted by a mobile device while walking.<sup>3</sup> Research shows people who walk and text are more likely to:

- Take longer to cross the street
- Ignore traffic signals
- Jaywalk
- Fail to look both ways before crossing

Texting while walking may seem harmless enough. But if you're staring down at your phone with your thumbs moving rapidly across the screen, you're not paying attention to what's in front of you.

Going for a walk? Put your phone away and pay attention. Those messages and memes will be there for you when you get back.

**MORE**

Facts about distracted driving  
<https://tinyurl.com/2u8cxvxb>

### Get Your Zzzs to Prevent 'The Munchie Effect' (continued from page 1)

#### Sleep habits to manage the munchies

If you're constantly craving junk food, take a closer look at your sleep habits. Are you getting 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night? Healthy sleep habits include:

- Going to bed at the same time each night, even on weekends
- Avoiding caffeine, alcohol and big meals late in the day

- Turning off all electronic devices (TV, computer, tablet, phone) about an hour before bed
- Doing something relaxing at bedtime like taking a bath or reading a book

And if you are short on sleep, steer clear of the donut shop and bakery.

**MORE**

The truth about food cravings  
<https://tinyurl.com/mry44hsk>

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## Take the April Health Challenge! Practice healthy-back habits

### Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: How can I reduce sodium in my diet?



# WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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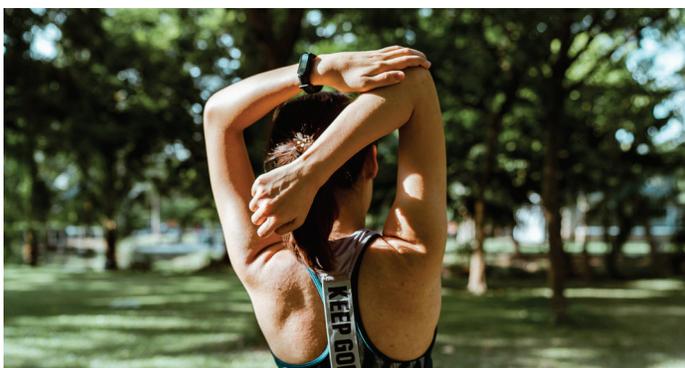
# Protect Your Back

## CHALLENGE

Practice healthy-back habits

### Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Protect Your Back.”
2. Create a plan to practice healthy-back habits.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When Florida resident Jenny Hodges woke up in the morning, her back hurt. At nearly 400 pounds, moving around to do simple tasks was difficult for this mother of three.

Her back hurt so much she used a motorized cart to get around, but even sitting was painful. Then one day, after 10 years of living in chronic pain, she fell, badly twisting her knee and ankle. And the back pain got worse.

“I hurt everywhere,” says Jenny. “I knew that to stop some of the pain, I needed to lose some weight.”

She started doing low-impact exercises at a local gym. She pedaled a recumbent bicycle a few minutes at a time. She practiced healthy stretching exercises for her back before and after every workout. And she improved her diet.

Overtime, she lost over 200 pounds, significantly improving her health and eliminating the chronic back pain that once ruled her life.

Want to keep your back strong and healthy? Take the month-long health challenge to Protect Your Back.

### Back to Basics

How much do you know about taking care of your back? Take this quiz to find out:



#### T F

1.   Sitting for long periods of time doesn't stress the muscles, tendons, and ligaments that support your back.
2.   If you are overweight, you're four times more likely to develop back pain than healthy weight people.
3.   You can injure your back doing something as simple as picking up a pencil.
4.   Aerobic exercise, stretching, and strength training can reduce and prevent back pain.
5.   Practicing proper posture and lifting techniques can protect your back from injury.

How did you do? Your back, spine, and supporting muscles, tendons, and ligaments are a critical link to the rest of your body. Maintaining a strong and healthy back is important to working, playing, and enjoying a healthy quality of life.

*Answers: 1. False, 2. True, 3. True, 4. True, 5. True.*

## A Back-Pain Reality Check

“Oh...my aching back!” Ever said that or know the feeling? When your back hurts, it can have a negative impact on your quality of life. For example...An estimated 31 million Americans live with back pain daily.<sup>1</sup>

- Back pain is one of the most common reasons people miss work to see a doctor.
- About 241 million missed work days in the U.S. are tied to back pain.
- 80% of adults will experience back pain at some time in their life.
- Lower back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

5 tips for a healthy back  
<https://tinyurl.com/2y3766r7>



## 11 Tips to Keep Your Back Healthy

FYI...surgery is usually a last resort for chronic back pain.<sup>4</sup> In most cases, back pain is not caused by serious conditions like an infection, fracture, or cancer. That means healthy lifestyle choices play a major part in preventing back pain.

**Here are 11 ways to keep your back healthy:**

- 1. Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight increases your risk for back problems. If you are overweight, losing just 10 to 15 pounds can help a lot.
- 2. Get regular exercise.** Aim for 30 minutes a day of aerobic exercise. Regular strength training at least two days a week can also help strengthen your muscles and your back.
- 3. Eat healthy foods** to get the protein, calcium, and vitamin D you need for a healthy body and a healthy back. You can do this by eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole-grains, legumes and healthy protein sources.
- 4. Warm-up before exercise.** Before working out, playing sports, or doing other strenuous activity (like moving furniture or yard work), warm up with light exercise before engaging your back.
- 5. Practice good posture.** Don't slouch when standing or sitting. When standing, keep your weight balanced on your feet. Your back supports weight most easily when curvature is reduced. At home or work, make sure your work surface is at a comfortable height for you.
- 6. Sit up straight.** When you're sitting, use a chair with good lumbar support and proper position and height for the task. Keep your shoulders back. Switch sitting positions often and periodically walk around or gently stretch

How to prevent back pain  
<https://tinyurl.com/7aus8prf>

## What Causes Back Pain?

For many, the pain is caused from straining or spraining the muscles or ligaments in the back.<sup>3</sup> It's often a result of lifting something improperly, or poor posture.



Back pain may also be caused by:

- Being overweight or obese.
- Lack of exercise and sedentary lifestyle habits.
- Pregnancy.
- A sudden, awkward movement, such as sneezing unexpectedly or twisting "wrong."
- Accidents or sports-related injuries.
- Disk degeneration, illness, infection, and inherited conditions.

muscles to relieve tension. A pillow or rolled-up towel placed behind the small of your back can provide some lumbar support. Consider using a stand-up desk, instead of sitting at a desk.

- 7. If you must sit for a long period of time,** rest your feet on a low stool or a stack of books. Or take regular breaks to stand up and stretch.
  - 8. Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes.** Why? Higher heels change your posture, and increase tension on the lower back.
  - 9. Adjust your sleep position.** Sleeping on your side helps reduce any curve in the spine. But if that isn't comfortable, try sleeping in a reclined position. Lie on your side with a pillow between your legs. Lie on your stomach with a pillow under your midsection. Or lie on your back with a pillow under your knees.
  - 10. If you smoke, quit.** If you don't smoke, don't start. Smoking reduces blood flow to the lower spine and causes the spinal discs to degenerate.
  - 11. Practice safe-lifting habits.** Lift with your knees, pull in your stomach muscles, and keep your head down and in line with your straight back. Keep the object close to your body. Do not twist when lifting. If it's too heavy to lift alone, get someone to help you, or find another way.
- Taking care of your back will keep you healthy and active so you can work, play, and enjoy life.

Seat belts save lives  
<https://tinyurl.com/2p974c3e>

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# Protect Your Back

## CHALLENGE

Practice healthy-back habits

### Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Take action to practice healthy-back habits.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to protect your back and make it a regular part of your life.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [ ] ex. min. _____								
HC [ ] ex. min. _____								
HC [ ] ex. min. _____								
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\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I practiced healthy-back habits

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

### Other wellness projects completed this month:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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# Q.

How can I reduce sodium in my diet?

# A.

Take a closer look at what you're eating.

Imagine filling a teaspoon with salt and eating it. Your tongue and your brain would deliver an instant message: "Yuck! Too salty!"

And you would reach for the nearest glass of water to wash out your mouth.

Sounds gross to eat that much salt at once, right?

The truth...most people eat nearly TWICE that amount of salt every day.

- **That's more than double** the amount of sodium than recommended (no more than 1,500 mg per day) to keep the heart healthy.<sup>1</sup>
- **A typical fast-food meal** like a burger and fries contains 1,400+ mg of sodium.
- **Many microwave meals and canned soups** contain more than 1,000 mg in a single serving.
- **Packaged and processed** snacks, sauces, dressings, meats, soups and chips are also high in sodium.



## The trouble with high-sodium habits

One recent study found that people who eat the most high-sodium foods are 19 percent more likely to develop heart disease, than those who consume less sodium.<sup>2</sup>

Too much sodium also raises the risk for:<sup>3</sup>

- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Kidney disease
- Poor bone health
- Headaches
- Stomach cancer

## 8 sodium habits for better health

Fortunately, a few simple changes can help you cut back on the amount of sodium you consume. Here are some things you can do:

- 1. Eat** more fresh fruits and veggies.
- 2. Buy** low-sodium foods and soups.
- 3. Read** food labels and track your sodium intake.

# ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

- 4. Drink** water instead of soft drinks.
- 5. Use** low-sodium salad dressings made with extra-virgin olive oil or vinegar.
- 6. Cut back** on eating fast-food and packaged meals.
- 7. Cook at home** more often. Use herbs and spices instead of salt to season food.
- 8. Go easy** on the salt shaker.

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