



Your Appetite and Exercise

An exercise workout can leave you feeling hungry, or not. It depends on multiple factors, including your body fat percentage, fitness level and the length and intensity of your workout. Individual responses to exercise are variable and hard to predict. Here are some clues:

The role of appetite hormones: When you exercise, your hunger hormone, **ghrelin**, may decrease, while levels of the hunger-suppressing hormone, **leptin**, increase — more so when you exercise vigorously (running) than moderately (brisk walking). This effect is greater the longer you exercise. But once your body temperature returns to normal after exercise your hunger will likely kick in.

Fuel up before your workout. It can provide energy needed to exercise and may reduce your post-exercise hunger. What you eat depends on the intensity and length of your activity. Experts recommend eating a small balanced meal before long, strenuous exercise. For light exercise, such as walking, a snack of fruits or vegetables may suffice.

Nourish after vigorous exercise. To help your muscles recover and to replace their glycogen supply (energy), eat a meal or snack that contains both carbohydrates (e.g., fruits and vegetables) and lean protein. If you tend to feel famished after exercise, drink a glass of water before your meal and eat slowly — it may help suppress overeating.

What's Causing Your Backache?

Because the back bears most of your body weight, it's vulnerable to strain and injury. It's easy to hurt your back when you lift or overdo activities or sit too long, especially if the muscles supporting your back are weak.

The primary risk factors include a sedentary lifestyle, arthritis, obesity and smoking. Back pain may directly result from standing or sitting for long periods, ongoing strenuous labor, twisting, overstretching or overlifting.

The sources of low back (lumbar) pain can be the spinal discs between the vertebrae, the ligaments around the spine and the spinal cord and nerves, and the lower back muscles. Pain in the upper back is often due to spinal inflammation.

Chronic lower back pain, lasting more than 12 weeks, is the leading cause of disability. Fortunately, we're learning more about how to prevent and treat it.

The American College of Physicians (ACP) recently published guidelines for treating low back pain (not due to damaged spinal nerves). The ACP emphasizes replacing prescription drugs with therapies, including:

- Physical therapy.
- Muscle-strengthening exercise.
- Acupuncture.
- Stress reduction.
- Meditation.
- Tai chi and yoga.
- Progressive muscle relaxation and biofeedback.

These interventions have been shown to help

patients shift their focus from pain and disability to being more functional despite residual pain. With practice, patients have found that mindfulness treatments such as meditation can produce a non-narcotic, pain-free effect.



Achievement is largely the product of steadily raising one's levels of **aspiration** and **expectation**. — Jack Nicklaus

Summer Cookout with Fruits and Vegetables

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Grilled steak and salmon are delicious, but don't forget that you can grill your side dishes, too. Vegetables, salads, fruit and even dessert benefit from the heat of the grill, and turn into something deliciously unexpected.

Vegetables work best when they are brushed with oil first, so they don't stick to the grill. Better yet, using a vegetable grilling basket that can easily be removed from the heat. The best vegetables to grill are:

- Eggplant
- Peppers
- Zucchini
- Onion
- Corn
- Potatoes
- Sweet potatoes
- Asparagus
- Mushrooms
- Broccoli

You can make amazing grilled salads, too.

Start with halved or quartered romaine lettuce and cabbage, and quickly grill over medium heat (about 5 minutes). Top with your favorite non-creamy dressing.



You can also grill flatbreads and add toppings. Try tomato bruschetta or tofu to replace meat.

Something sweet?

As a side dish or dessert, don't forget about grilling fruit. Something magical happens when juicy fruit meets heat and the sugar caramelizes! Try peaches, pineapple, banana, watermelon, pears or cantaloupe.



Health concerns? Grilling animal proteins such as beef, fish, pork and poultry has a downside: Heat mixed with them can create **heterocyclic amines (HCA)**, which are compounds that are mutagenic — they cause changes in DNA that may increase the risk of cancer. The good news is that HCAs are not found in significant amounts in vegetables, fruit, tofu or other foods. So get your grill on, but cook a variety of healthy options.

Pregnancy Protections

If you're pregnant, congratulations! If it's your first pregnancy, here are some key starting points:

Follow your health care provider's orders. First, find the right provider for your prenatal care and a preconception visit. Prepare well for each visit and take copious notes. Talk about suitable exercise and diet to help you gain weight at a healthy rate. The Institute of Medicine guidelines for weight gain say if you are:

- Underweight: gain 28 to 40 pounds
- Normal weight: gain 25 to 35 pounds
- Overweight: gain 15 to 25 pounds
- Obese: gain 11 to 20 pounds

Learn all you can. Educating yourself about pregnancy is vital for a healthy pregnancy. It may also help you see potential red flags. The CDC advises that you **call your health care provider promptly if you experience:** fainting, shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, vaginal bleeding, painful urination, strong cramps, or decreased fetal activity beyond 24 hours.

Attend a childbirth class. It will teach you more about delivery and infant care and provide opportunities to ask specific questions and voice your concerns.



Finding a Doctor

When it comes to your health care, do your part when selecting a new health care provider and building a strong, effective relationship. You'll want to choose a provider you feel comfortable having thorough, honest discussions with, and who is expert in your particular health concerns.

Choosing a provider from inside your health insurance network will help lower your out-of-pocket costs. For guidelines, visit your health plan's website to review network provider profiles.

Primary health care providers typically specialize in family practice or general practice. They treat patients of all ages for a wide variety of health problems and do checkups, screenings and direct management of diabetes and other ongoing conditions.

Ask for referrals from people you know and have them describe their care provider experience. Or ask other health care professionals you've met or, if you're moving, ask your current provider for a referral for your new location.

Be prepared to talk about your medical history, any chronic conditions, or medicines (including supplements and over-the-counter medications) you take. List questions you have and take notes during your visit.



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