



**Weill Cornell
Medicine**

**Iris Cantor Women's
Health Center**

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This just in...

**Higher Whole-Grain
Intake May Reduce
Risk of Liver Cancer**

Increasing intake of whole grains and dietary fiber can reduce risk of insulin resistance, hyperinsulinemia, and inflammation—factors which lead to liver cancer, also known as hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), according to research published in *JAMA Oncology*, Feb. 21, 2019. Data on more than 125,000 people (61.5 percent women) were reviewed for more than 24 years. The researchers analyzed participants' intake of whole grains, two of their subcomponents bran and germ, and dietary fiber from cereal, fruits, and vegetables. At the end of the study period, 141 participants had HCC. Those who increased their whole grains and total dietary fiber intake over the study period significantly reduced their risk of the predisposition factors for HCC. 🍌

Women's Nutrition Connection

Helping You Live A Healthier, More Active Life™

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Beets and Other "Super" Vegetables

Tap into the healthy nutrients in vegetable superfoods.

Superfoods are aptly named because their rich nutrients—including vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and disease-fighting phytochemicals—provide numerous health benefits. They have been linked with reducing inflammation and LDL ("bad") cholesterol, and lowering your risk of a heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers.

Superfoods are found in whole grains, protein, and fruit, but some of the most nutrient-packed are from the vegetable category—which most adults don't get enough of. According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study, just 9.3 percent of participants consumed the recommended 2.5 servings per day.



© sagamans | Getty Images

Beets contain betacyanin, which fights cancer, and the anti-inflammatory betaine.

Some of the most well-known and easy-to-find superfoods include beets, asparagus, avocado, broccoli, carrots, and kale.

Beets have high levels of potassium (an electrolyte which counters the effects of sodium and balances chemicals in the body), magnesium (for healthy muscles, nerves, blood sugar, and blood pressure), iron (for making red blood cells), and folate (also known as vitamin B9, which

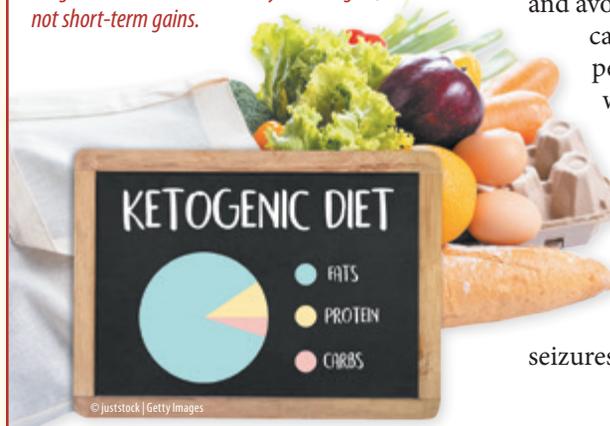
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The Pros and Cons of Fad Diets

They bring quick weight loss, but are hard to sustain and can pose some health risks.

Everyone wants a weight-loss shortcut: Just eat this food and follow these rules to make the pounds melt away. But fad diets aren't so simple. They are restrictive and difficult to sustain. Before you try one, understand its pros and cons.

Long-term health should always be the goal, not short-term gains.



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Keto Diet

The Ketogenic diet forces the body to burn fat for fuel, a state known as ketosis. The diet requires that you eat lots of saturated fat (like cheese, heavy cream, butter, bacon, red meat, and poultry with skin), some unsaturated fat (like nuts, seeds, and avocados), and miniscule amounts of carbohydrates (as few as 20 grams per day) from fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. Some variations of the Keto diet allow more carbs than others.

Pros: The diet is associated with quick weight loss and short-term blood sugar control. And, there is solid evidence it helps reduce seizures in people with epilepsy.

Continued on page 6

Diet Drinks Found to Increase Stroke Risk

Of 81,714 women ages 50 to 79 who participated in the Women's Health Initiative Observational Study (1993 to 1998), those who self-reported drinking two or more artificially sweetened beverages per day—just 5.1 percent of the group—had the highest risk of small artery occlusion ischemic stroke, as well as the highest risk of death from all causes. Among women with no history of cardiovascular disease or diabetes, high consumption of diet beverages resulted in a two-fold increase in ischemic stroke risk, according to a study published in *Stroke*, Feb. 14, 2019. Also, women with a body mass index (BMI) above 30 (obese) had double the risk than those with a BMI under 30.

Tomatoes' Health Benefits Differ by Their Skin Color

Tomatoes contain antioxidants, which fight free radicals (unstable molecules) in the body. However, a recent study, published in *Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science*, January 2019, found that different types and colors of tomatoes have different antioxidants. Researchers studied four organic and four hybrid tomato types. The classic red tomato had the most lycopene and beta carotene, both carotenoids, which are good for heart health and protect against some cancers and sun damage. Orange tomatoes were highest in tocopherol (vitamin E), which is good for skin, including skin cancer and rashes. Yellow tomatoes had the most polyphenols, which help with cholesterol, blood pressure, and overall heart health. 🍅

Demystifying Today's Milk Choices

How to decide which one is right for you.

In the U.S., milk is a primary part of most children's diets from the time they're born. However, adults often outgrow the taste, or develop an intolerance to the milk-sugar lactose. As a result, more than 80 percent of people in the U.S. don't meet their daily recommended requirement of 3 cups of low-fat dairy products (milk, yogurt, and cheese) per day, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Calcium, a key nutrient in dairy, is critical for preventing bone loss as we age. A 2018 study in *Osteoporosis International* showed an 8 percent decrease in hip fractures among men and women who drank milk.

Meanwhile, a rise in research touting the benefits of plant-based diets, along with increased awareness of lactose intolerance, has fueled a new alternative milk category. With so many choices, how can a person select the right milk to put into their coffee or cereal bowl? Here, we help decipher your options.

Dairy Milk

Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, and fat-free. These four milk types, as well as lactose-free, A2, and organic milk, have the same amounts of protein (8 grams [g] per cup) and calcium (300 milligrams), along with potassium, phosphorus, iodine, thiamin, riboflavin, and vitamins A, B12, and D3. Vitamin D is added in processing. These milks also contain trace amounts of selenium, zinc, and magnesium.

With society's growing interest in eating healthier, many dairy farms have



Low-fat or fat-free milk can help you meet your recommended requirement of 3 cups of dairy per day.

eliminated antibiotics and artificial growth hormones. Also, removing the milk fat takes out much of the vitamin A, so reduced-fat and fat-free milks are fortified with vitamin A palmitate (which comes from animal products).

Lactose-free. Lactose is a sugar found naturally in dairy milk that some people can't fully digest, and it causes bloating, gas, a sour feeling, and diarrhea. The term "lactose-free" is a misnomer. The lactose is not gone. Instead, the enzyme lactase has been added to break down the lactose and make it easier to digest. Lactose-free milk comes in whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, and fat-free.

A1 and A2. A1 and A2 are proteins. Most regular dairy milk has both, although some cows have one or the other in their DNA. Since A1 can cause digestive stress, some cows are being bred to carry just A2, while some companies are removing A1 in processing.

Organic. Organic milk is more expensive than regular, but it contains no antibiotics, pesticides, synthetic

Women's Nutrition Connection

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growth hormones, or genetically modified ingredients. Farmers follow guidelines set by the USDA that cover everything from the origin of the livestock to their living conditions and the way they are raised. Organic milk is not pasteurized to slow the growth of bacteria; rather, it's sterilized at a higher temperature than regular milk (280°F vs. 165°F) so it will last longer.

Evaporated, condensed, powdered, and ultra-high temperature (UHT).

These all start out as whole milk. Evaporated milk has 60 percent of its water removed. Condensed milk is thicker than evaporated and comes in both unsweetened and sweetened. In the sweetened version, sugar is added as a preservative. Powdered milk has had all of its water removed. All these milks can be reconstituted with water or used as they are in cooking and baking. Their concentration gives them more nutrients than regular dairy milk.

These milks are sterilized. UHT milk (such as Parmalat) has been heated to 275°F to kill fungal spores and can last up to six months unopened and unrefrigerated.

Non-Dairy Milk

Nut milk. Two options to dairy milk in the nut family are almond and cashew milk. They are made by grinding nuts into a powder and mixing them with

water until smooth, then straining the pulp. Nut milks have more calcium than dairy milk (45% of your Recommended Daily Value compared with 30 percent for dairy milk), but that's because they are fortified. They have just 60 calories and 2.5 grams of fat per cup. Nut milk is healthy, but it does not contain as much protein as dairy milk, so be sure to get your daily protein requirement elsewhere. You can make nut milk at home with a blender, nuts, and some water, then straining the pulp.

Soy milk. Soy milk is high in protein (8 g) and in healthy unsaturated fats. Of 4.5 g of fat per cup, 90 percent is from unsaturated fat. Research published in the journal *Nutrients*, as well as other earlier studies, have pointed



If you prefer a plant-based milk, be sure to make up your protein from other foods in your daily diet.

to soy having anti-inflammatory effects, resulting in reduced risk for cardiovascular disease and high cholesterol.

Rice milk. Rice milk is made primarily from brown rice. It contains no fats and is fortified with calcium and vitamins A, B12, and D, but has very

little protein. It comes in a shelf-stable (non-refrigerated) version and can be stored for a few months unopened.

Coconut milk. Ninety percent of coconut milk's fat is saturated fat. Coconut milk contains much of the same nutrients as other milks, but due to its fat content, should be consumed only in small amounts. 🌴

Red Raspberries May Help Blood Sugar Levels

For people who have prediabetes or are insulin resistant, consuming red raspberries may help keep their blood sugar from spiking and reduce their need for insulin, according to a study published in *Obesity*, Feb. 14, 2019. The fiber in the fruit prevents the sugar from being absorbed. Also, anthocyanins—an anti-inflammatory and disease fighter—suppress the body's production of sugar. In this study, 32 people ages 20 to 60 were given breakfast for three days. The test group contained 21 overweight or obese people who had prediabetes; the remainder did not have those characteristics. The first day, there were no raspberries in the meal. On day two, breakfast included 1 cup of frozen red raspberries. On day three, breakfast included 2 cups of frozen red raspberries. The results showed that as the amount of raspberries consumed increased, participants needed less insulin.

Self-Monitoring Results in Higher Weight Loss

People who monitored their food intake on a daily basis through a private web portal had better success with both short- and long-term weight loss than people who didn't visit the site at all or didn't visit as much, according to research published in the journal *Obesity*, Feb. 25, 2019. Of 124 people, 80.1 percent were obese; 90.8 percent were female; 23.2 percent were African American. Participants were evaluated in month 1 and again in month 6. In the first month, they spent 23 minutes on the website. By month six, they had cut down to 15 minutes per day but were just as successful as they were earlier in the program. People who lost more than 5 to 10 percent of their weight spent the most time on the website, but frequency of visits was the leading factor more than time spent. African Americans logged into the site for the least amount of time. 🌟

MILK SERVING: 1 CUP	CALORIES	FAT (G)	SAT FAT (G)	CARB (G)	PROTEIN (G)	SUGAR (G)	SODIUM (MG)
Whole/Organic/UHT	150	8	5	12	8	11	120
Reduced-fat	130	5	3	12	8	12	130
Low-fat	110	2.5	1.5	13	8	12	130
Fat-free/skim	90	0	0	13	8	12	130
Lactose-free/A2	160	9	5	13	8	12	130
Nut	60	2.5	0	8	1	7	150
Soy	110	4.5	0.5	9	8	6	115
Rice	130	2.5	0	25	1	14	80
Coconut	70	4.5	4	6	0	5	65

Note: g=gram, mg=milligram, sat fat=saturated fat, carb=carbohydrates. Source: Food packages, USDA.gov, and brand websites.

Choosing Low-GI Foods Without Having to Do the Math

A naturally low-glycemic index diet offers benefits to everyone, not just people with diabetes.

Recent research has cast doubt on the precise numbers many people rely on to keep the glycemic index (GI) of their diets low. The glycemic index measures how rapidly foods containing carbohydrates raise your blood sugar, using a 100-point scale. But scientists have found that the actual blood-sugar effects of common foods vary widely from one person to another—and even for the same individual, depending on other elements of a meal.

But the general principles of a low-GI diet still can help you eat more healthfully—you just don't have to fret as much about the numbers if you make good food choices.

“By choosing more whole foods and avoiding highly processed foods, people can lower the glycemic index of their diet without having to calculate the exact GI or glycemic load of meals—something that is really tedious and even dietitians don't do,” says Rachel Lustgarten, a registered dietitian nutritionist at Weill Cornell Medicine.

“A lower-glycemic diet—one that includes more whole foods and less processed foods—has many benefits,” she explains. For instance, “A low-GI diet helps control blood sugar in diabetics, but even those without impaired fasting glucose will notice eating this way helps control hunger and may decrease cravings for carbohydrates.”

Health and Weight Loss

Besides blood-sugar benefits, a low-GI diet may help improve cholesterol and reduce markers of inflammation and risk of heart disease. Research even has suggested that people who consume lower-GI diets are less likely to develop certain types of cancer. Carbohydrate quality



If you eat whole, unprocessed foods at every meal, you will have less need to question where your foods fall on the glycemic index.

LOWER THE GLYCEMIC INDEX OF YOUR DIET BY MAKING SMART CHOICES	
INSTEAD OF...	CHOOSE...
White rice	Quinoa, barley, and other whole grains
White potatoes	Whole-grain pasta
Corn flakes, rice cereal	Steel-cut oatmeal, whole-grain cereals
Fruit juice	Whole fruits
Cakes, cookies	Plain yogurt topped with fruit and nuts
Sweet corn	Legumes (black, kidney, pinto beans, etc.)
Rice or oat milk	Dairy milk or other alternative milks
Crackers, pretzels	Nuts
Flatbread, pizza crust	Whole-wheat tortilla

and a low glycemic index also have been linked with lower risk of advanced macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness among older Americans.

It may be that these benefits are derived simply from switching to healthier, less-processed fare and eating less white bread, starchy foods, and sugary desserts rather than the direct effects of modulating blood-sugar impacts.

“A popular application of a lower glycemic diet is the Mediterranean diet, which has been shown to have cardiovascular health benefits and aid in weight control,” Lustgarten points out.

A review of data from three long-term studies of health professionals, totaling 120,000 men and women followed for more than 16 years, found that diets with a higher glycemic index were associated with more weight gain over time.

GI Factors

To lower the glycemic index of your diet without worrying about a list of (maybe not very reliable) numbers, it helps to understand what affects a carbohydrate-containing food's blood-sugar impact. Keep these factors—some of which you can easily control—in mind:

The type of starch:

Foods higher in amylose, also called “resistant starch,” take longer to digest and so have a lower GI. Examples include oats and legumes.

The type of sugar:

Fructose, found naturally in fruits, has by far the lowest glycemic index of all sugars. (Honey, on the other hand, is similar to table sugar.)

Ripeness:

As fruits ripen, their complex carbohydrates break down into sugars, increasing GI.

Processing:

Grinding and finely cutting foods make them digest faster. This is one reason, for example, to prefer coarser steel-cut to rolled oats or instant oatmeal. Juicing also speeds up blood-sugar effects, while leaving healthy fiber behind; it's better to eat a whole

orange than to drink a glass of OJ.

Other nutrients: Healthy unsaturated fats and natural acids slow down digestion, so you can blunt the impact of higher-GI foods by adding a little olive oil or lemon juice.

Cooking time: Long cooking times break down foods, increasing GI.

Of course, having a lower glycemic index doesn't automatically mean a food is nutritious. You still need to select foods that contain plenty of vitamins, minerals, protein, and fiber for the amount of calories consumed. There also are many relatively low-GI foods that are less healthy because they are high in saturated fat, sugar, and calories, such as ice cream. French fries have a lower GI than baked or mashed potatoes, but that doesn't make them a healthier choice. 🍌

String Cheese Makes a Healthy Snack

Made from mozzarella, string cheese is high in protein and low in calories.

Cheese, in general, is an excellent dairy source. It contains calcium for strong bones—150 milligrams (mg) per stick, protein for muscles and energy, and vitamins A for healthy vision and the immune system, B12 for nervous system and blood cell health, riboflavin (vitamin B2), which helps the body break down foods to create energy and transport oxygen, and niacin (vitamin B3), which helps lower cholesterol, ease inflammation, and improve brain function. Cheese generally has no artificial flavors, preservatives, or added sugars.

A Lower-Fat Choice

But cheese can be high in fat. One of the healthiest cheeses is mozzarella, which is used to make “string” cheese. String cheese is a good snack option because it comes individually wrapped in single servings. This makes it easy to carry, store, and consume and to not overeat. You also can cube one stick and add it to a salad to boost your protein, or melt it onto a piece of toast.

Mozzarella string cheese comes in three types: regular, low moisture-part skim, and reduced-fat. The

difference between regular and low moisture, part skim is flavor, not fat content. Regular string cheese has more moisture and is softer. In low moisture-part skim, the cheese is “soured” longer and allowed to dry out. This gives the cheese a longer shelf life.

About half of mozzarella string cheese’s fat is saturated fat. Regular string cheese has 6 grams (g) of fat, with 3.5 g of saturated fat. Low-moisture-part-skim has about the same amount of fat as regular string cheese, whereas, reduced-fat string cheese has less than half that amount (see chart below).

Your Recommended Daily Allowance

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) suggests that adults consume no more than 1½ ounces of low-fat or fat-free cheese daily. The USDA’s

© greenp | Getty Images



An individually-wrapped cheese stick is perfectly portioned for grab-and-go eating.

recommended daily allowance for saturated fat is 10 percent or less of your total daily fat consumption. Also, cheese has sodium, and that counts toward your daily sodium allowance of 2,300 mg (1,500 mg if you have high blood pressure).

In addition to mozzarella, string cheese comes in other flavors, including cheddar and colby jack. There also are vegetarian versions, as well as kosher, and organic brands. 🧀



SUPERMARKET SLEUTH STRING CHEESE		CALORIES	FAT (G)	SAT FAT (G)	CARB (G)	SODIUM (MG)	SUGAR (G)	FIBER (G)	PROTEIN (G)
SERVING: 1 STICK									
Weight Watchers Light		50	2.5	1.5	1	140	0	0	6
Sargento Natural Light		50	2.5	1.5	1	160	0	0	6
Babybel, Mini Mozzarella (Round)		50	2.5	1.5	0	160	0	0	6
Galbani Low Moisture Part Skim		80	6	3.5	0	170	0	0	0
Kraft Low-Moisture, Part Skim		80	5	3	1	180	<1	0	7
Galbani Reduced Fat		70	4	3	1	180	0	0	8
Happy Belly Low Moisture, Part Skim		80	6	3	2	190	1	0	7
Fit & Active		50	2.5	1.5	<1	200	0	0	7
Frigo Light		50	2.5	1.5	1	200	0	0	6
Market Pantry (Target)		50	2.5	1.5	1	200	0	0	7

Note: g=gram, mg=milligram, sat fat=saturated fat, carb=carbohydrates. Source: Food packages and company websites. Products are in order by sodium count. Images courtesy of their manufacturers.

Beets—Continued from page 1

helps make DNA). One cup of cooked beets provides 34 percent of your Daily Value for folate and 14 percent for potassium. Beets also are an excellent source of lycopene and anthocyanins—antioxidants that help reduce inflammation. “Roast beet slices in the oven; then toss them with raw spinach, orange pieces, almonds, and shredded chicken for a filling salad,” says Jenna Rosenfeld, a registered dietitian at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell.

Asparagus contains rutin, a phytochemical that strengthens capillary walls, and glutathione, an antioxidant which supports the immune system and helps eliminate toxins. Asparagus has more folic acid than any other vegetable, and contains fiber, potassium, selenium, manganese, zinc, and iron.

Avocados, technically fruit, are high in heart-healthy unsaturated fats, and can help lower LDL cholesterol as well

as increase HDL (“good”) cholesterol. High in potassium and fiber, avocados can help lower blood pressure while maintaining a healthy digestive system. “Mix mashed avocado with tuna instead of mayonnaise for a creamy tuna salad that’s more heart healthy,” recommends Rosenfeld. When combined with a food source of vitamin A (carrots or tomatoes), avocados can boost absorption of vitamin A six times.

Broccoli offers significant amounts of vitamins A, C and K, folate, fiber, and protein. A cruciferous vegetable, broccoli contains the phytochemical glucinolate, which helps fight cancer, inflammation, and oxidative stress.

Carrots are high in vitamins A, B₆, C, and K, fiber, and potassium (essential for heart and kidney health). Each color—orange, purple, yellow, red, and white—provides a different antioxidant, but all help prevent cancer. “Combine carrots with guacamole or hummus for heart-



Each color carrot—orange, purple, yellow, red, and white—offers a different antioxidant.

healthy fats, and to increase absorption of vitamin A,” says Rosenfeld.

Kale contains vitamins E and K, and magnesium. Vitamin K helps with blood clotting and bone health. Vitamin E protects the brain from oxidative stress, while magnesium helps with learning and memory, as well as reduces anxiety and depression.

Other “super” vegetables include tomatoes, leafy greens, onions, and squash. Eat a “rainbow” of produce to consume the greatest variety of nutrients. 🌈

Fad Diets—Continued from page 1

Cons: There’s no clinical evidence that a Keto diet keeps weight off or helps chronic disease in the long term. Conversely, the diet increases the risk for constipation because of a lack of fiber, causes fuzzy thinking because the brain needs carbs, increases kidney or liver problems from being overworked to metabolize large amounts of fats and protein, and increases LDL (“bad”) cholesterol because of the high intake of saturated fat. It results in a nutrient deficiency from missing foods such as whole grains.

Atkins Diet

A version of Keto, Atkins limits carbs until you reach your target weight. Then, they are slowly added back in, unless weight is regained.

Pros: Atkins is designed for short-term weight loss.

Cons: There’s no evidence Atkins works in the long term. The diet has the same risks as a Keto diet.

Paleo Diet

Paleo mimics a theoretical caveman’s diet. That means no dairy, whole grains, legumes, refined sugar, alcohol, or processed foods. You can eat

all the meat, fish, poultry, non-starchy vegetables (potatoes are discouraged), fruits, nuts, and seeds you want.

Pros: The diet is linked to short-term weight loss and improvements in blood pressure and cholesterol control.

Cons: There’s not enough evidence to show that this diet supports long-term weight loss or improved health. Cutting out entire food groups is a risk for nutrient deficiency. Eating lots of saturated fat increases the risk for high LDL cholesterol and heart disease.

The Zone Diet

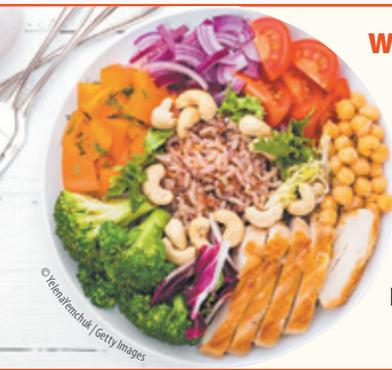
The Zone diet tries to keep blood sugar levels from spiking or plummeting. It restricts calories and requires a balance of nutrients (40 percent carbs, 30 percent protein, and 30 percent fat) at each meal or snack to stay within the “zone.”

Pros: Lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables are encouraged; starchy vegetables, refined bread products, and saturated fats are discouraged.

Cons: Studies are mixed about whether the Zone’s nutrient ratio works and helps people lose weight. 🌈

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- ◆ The healthiest diets align with the USDA’s guidelines at ChooseMyPlate.org.
- ◆ Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, ¼ with whole grains, and ¼ with protein.
- ◆ The Mediterranean and DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diets are associated with long-term benefits for heart and brain health, as well as weight loss.



Strengthen Your Pelvic Floor Muscles

Improve muscle and bladder control with a few simple exercises.

If you have pain in your lower abdominal area or are challenged by incontinence issues that prevent you from living a complete life, you may be suffering from a pelvic floor disorder (PFD).

PFDs affect 25 percent of all women, according to the National Institutes of Health. That number rises to 37 percent for women over 60 and to 50 percent for women 80 and older.

The pelvic floor is like a bridge that connects the front of the pelvic cavity to the back. “Pelvic floor muscles help to support your pelvic organs, including the uterus, bladder, and rectum,” explains Anna Ribaudo, a board certified orthopedic specialist at the Weill Cornell-affiliated Hospital for Special Surgery’s Integrative Care Center.

A PFD results when the muscles and connective tissue within the pelvic cavity weaken or are injured. Factors affecting PFDs include age, past pregnancies, surgery (such as a hysterectomy), weight, and injury. It also can be exacerbated by a long-term infection or endometriosis. You might experience urine leakage, pain during sex, or pain when lifting something heavy.

The benefits of a strong pelvic floor include lowering your risk of vaginal or rectal prolapse (collapsing), better bladder and bowel control, and overall ease with maintaining good posture and stability, since your pelvic floor—along with your core muscles—make up the base of your body’s musculoskeletal system.

Improving Pelvic Floor Strength

If you are diagnosed with a PFD, your treatment plan advised by your doctor will likely include some strengthening exercises. The “Kegel” has been the go-to exercise for pelvic floor strengthening. A Kegel turns on the muscles that stop the flow of urine. “If you can stop your flow midstream, you have successfully isolated the right muscles,” Ribaudo says.

To make this exercise even more effective, she says, work your Kegel while performing an abset—this involves pulling your belly button in toward your spine to engage your core muscles. “Once you have mastered doing both of these contractions, practice doing them at the same time.”



Combining core-building exercises with Kegel exercises can help strengthen your pelvic floor muscles.

The best way to strengthen these muscles is to practice during the day. “Think about engaging your abset along with your Kegel while walking, waiting at a red light, climbing stairs, etc. Work up to holding these contractions for one minute to build endurance.”

A squat is a great exercise for your legs. But add a Kegel and an abset—“now you’re making it three times as effective by including your core and pelvic floor,” Ribaudo says.

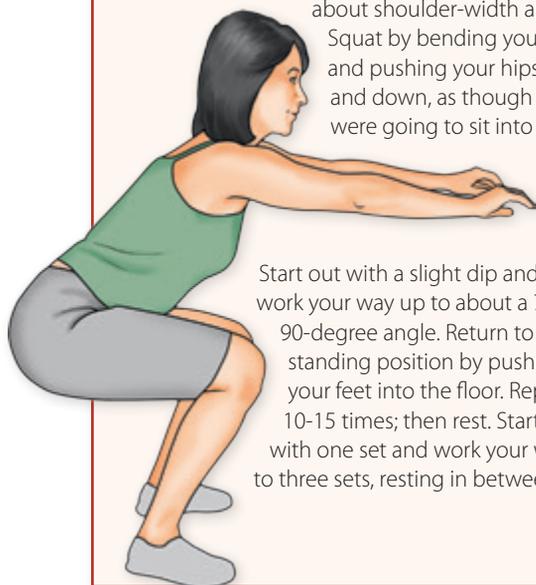
The bird-dog exercise is a core exercise that emphasizes low back strength and balance. “It can double as a pelvic floor exercise if you maintain a Kegel while doing it,” says Ribaudo. “This should even increase your overall balance while performing the exercise.”

MOVES OF THE MONTH

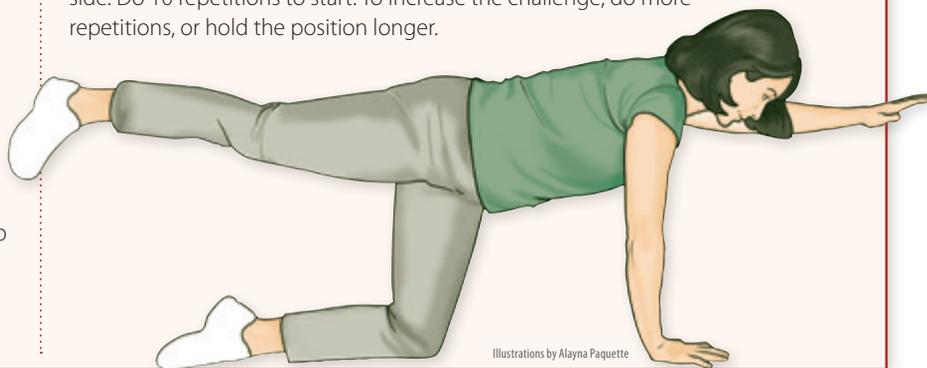
Pelvic Floor Strengthening Exercises

Squat: Stand with good posture, legs about shoulder-width apart. Squat by bending your knees and pushing your hips back and down, as though you were going to sit into a chair.

Start out with a slight dip and work your way up to about a 70- to 90-degree angle. Return to the standing position by pushing your feet into the floor. Repeat 10-15 times; then rest. Start out with one set and work your way up to three sets, resting in between.



Bird Dog: On a soft mat or carpet, go down to the floor on all fours. Knees and hands should be at 90-degree angles to your torso. Keep your spine and neck in a neutral position—look down at the floor without allowing your neck to bend forward, and don’t allow your back to arch. Pull your abdominal muscles up and in for stability and slowly extend one leg behind you while reaching your opposite arm straight out in front of you, again making sure your back doesn’t arch. Focus on keeping your trunk parallel to the ground. Hold this position for 3-5 seconds; then slowly return to the start position. Switch legs and arms; then do the same moves on the opposite side. Do 10 repetitions to start. To increase the challenge, do more repetitions, or hold the position longer.



Illustrations by Alayna Paquette



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ASK DR. ETINGIN

Lipozene facts... Resolving GERD naturally

Q. Is Lipozene a fad or does it really help with weight loss?

A. Any weight loss aid that says it works without dietary changes or exercise should

be suspect. Lipozene's main ingredient is glucomannan, a water-soluble fiber. This means it absorbs water in your system. Foods that contain soluble fiber expand in your stomach and keep you satiated longer. They also aid in digestion and waste removal. Healthy foods that contain soluble fiber include oatmeal, fruits, and legumes.

However, too much soluble fiber may remove more than it should and can leave you dehydrated. If you're adding water-soluble supplements such as Lipozene to your diet, this could be a problem, and you may have to drink more than your daily allowance of eight to 10 8-ounce glasses of water. A lack of hydration also can cause constipation. And in some people, glucomannan has been known to present other digestive symptoms, such as gas, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

The best way to lose weight is to eliminate salt, sugar, and starchy foods from your diet. Stick to a diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and adequate hydration. Then add to that some moderate exercise of 30 minutes a day five days a week (150 minutes total) and you should lose weight gradually (1 to 2 pounds a week). Note that achieving a healthy weight is a long-term plan, not a short-term strategy, so any healthy changes you make should be integrated into your permanent dietary plan.

Q. Are there any foods that can help relieve heartburn or GERD naturally?

A. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is caused by a problem with the lower esophageal sphincter, resulting in the backwashing of stomach acid into the esophagus. The opposite of acid is "alkaline," so high-alkaline foods can help absorb and balance the acid in your stomach. High-alkaline foods include bananas, melons, oatmeal, yogurt, fermented foods, and green vegetables. Bananas and apples also contain a natural antacid.

A soothing tea such as ginger or chamomile, aloe juice, or a pinch of baking soda added to your water also can help adjust the pH balance between acidity and alkaline. Even plain water helps dilute the acid in your stomach and flush it from your esophagus. Drinking hot water seems to work for some people as well.

Other methods that may help reduce symptoms are sleeping on a slight incline with your head elevated about eight inches, and wearing loose-fitting clothes. Losing weight also is key, as acid reflux can worsen with obesity.

To reduce or eliminate GERD symptoms, don't smoke, drink, overeat, or eat after 7 p.m., and don't lie down for at least an hour after a meal. Also, stay away from spicy foods, soda, caffeine, and chocolate. These can make it worse.

GERD triggers are not the same for everyone, so if something bothers you that is not on this list, try removing it from your diet and then evaluating how you feel. 🍌

Send questions for Dr. Etingin to:
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DID YOU KNOW...



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Organic Foods Can Reduce Pesticide Exposure

People are exposed to pesticides through the foods they eat. Organic foods, which have no pesticides, can play a significant role in reducing the amount of pesticides in your body.

To prove that theory, researchers recruited four racially diverse families of three to five people, one family from each U.S. geographic region (North, South, East, and West) and asked them to follow their usual diet for six days, then change their dietary pattern to organic for six days. Research assistants delivered the organic foods, and a licensed chef or caterer prepared the organic dinners. Food diaries were maintained, and a telephone interview was conducted after the test phase.

Additionally, families were queried about use and storage of pesticides at home and proximity to known pesticide locations, such as golf courses. Urine samples collected daily were tested for 18 pesticides. Results, published in *Environmental Research*, April 2019, showed significant reductions in 13 pesticides. 🍌

COMING SOON

- Anti-inflammatory foods
- How to cook a healthy BBQ
- The incredible edible egg

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