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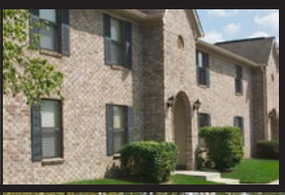
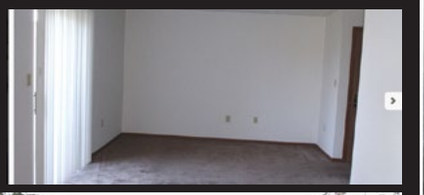
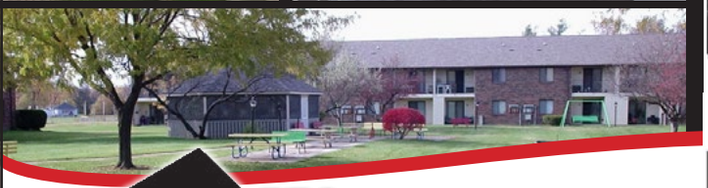
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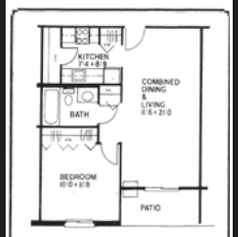
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Do You Really Know Where Your Food Comes From? The Questions That Can Change the Way You Eat

By Katina Curran
- Nutrition & Wellness Coach and Co-Owner of Four Seasons Local Market

We spend so much time thinking about what we eat, but how often do we stop to think about where our food comes from?

As a nutrition and wellness coach for more than 20 years, I have encouraged people to look beyond calories, carbohydrates, and marketing claims. Making healthy choices begins with learning how to read labels, understand ingredients, and ask questions about how our food is grown, raised, processed, and prepared.

Food labels can provide helpful information, but they can also be confusing. Words such as “natural,” “healthy,” “multigrain,” or “made with whole grains” do not always tell the whole story. Take time to read the ingredient list and nutrition facts panel. Notice the serving size, added sugars, sodium, types of fats, and the number of recognizable ingredients. The front of a package is designed to catch your attention; the information on the back can help you make a more informed decision.

It is also worth asking where your food comes from. What is being used on the fields where it is grown? What are the animals being fed? Are they raised on pasture, given access to the outdoors, or raised in confinement? How are they cared for, and where and how are they processed?

These questions are not meant to create fear or require perfection. They are simply ways to become more informed about the choices available to you.

The way food is grown, raised, and processed can affect its nutritional qualities, environmental impact, and the welfare of animals. Farming practices vary, and labels do not always provide every detail. When possible, learning directly from farmers and producers can offer valuable insight.

Knowing your farmer can be especially helpful. Local farmers are often able to explain how they grow their crops, care for their animals, and handle their products. Building those connections can make food choices feel more personal and meaningful.

As an anti-inflammatory nutrition coach, I believe small, intentional choices can make a difference in our overall wellness. You do not have to change everything overnight. Start by reading one label more carefully, choosing foods with ingredients you recognize, asking where a product came from, or learning more about the people who produced it.

Food is more than what appears on a package or plate. It has a story, and understanding that story can help us make choices that support our health, our families, our communities, and the people who grow and produce our food.

At Four Seasons Local Market, we know every farmer who supplies the food we offer. We invite you to come in, ask questions, and get to know the farmers behind your food.

Four Seasons Local Market



It's Biology, Not Laziness: What Parents Should Know About New Teen Weight Medicines

By Anita Joshi, MD, FAAP

When families visit Joshi Pediatrics to talk about a child's weight, the hardest part is often the guilt. For years, parents and kids have been told that extra weight is just a lack of willpower. While I agree that it is important to have healthy habits I also want to stress that obesity is biology, not laziness.

A child's weight is strongly shaped by genetics, brain chemistry, and hormones that regulate hunger. For some, biology often fights back against weight loss by slowing down metabolism and ramping up appetite. That is why new prescription medicines called GLP-1s (such as Wegovy), approved for teens 12 and older, are bringing real hope.

GLP-1 medicines mimic natural gut hormones that tell the brain, "I am full." They slow digestion and steady insulin levels. For teens with severe weight struggles and health risks—like early liver concerns, pre-diabetes, high cholesterol, or sleep apnea—these medicines help quiet "food noise," or the constant urge to eat.

Let me also be clear, medicines do not replace healthy daily living, but they can level the playing field so positive habits can actually stick. We never prescribe them on their own. Under guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics, they always go alongside recommendations of

Nutritious meals: Wholesome proteins, veggies, and fiber to fuel growth.

Fun movement: Physical activities kids actually enjoy, not exercise as punishment.

Good sleep: Steady bedtimes to help balance hormones and energy.

Mental support: A positive home environment free of guilt or teasing.

Because adolescents are still growing, these treatments require steady doctor visits. Teens need enough protein and strength building exercises so they do not lose healthy muscle while losing weight.

These medicines have side effects like nausea and constipation that are common so monitoring and low dose adjustments are important. Obesity is an ongoing medical condition and when the medicine stops, hunger and weight often return. These treatments are expensive, and insurance coverage can still be difficult to obtain, so working to use them in those who are at the most severe risk are important

The greatest gift of these new treatments is removing shame. Weight is a medical issue, not a personal flaw.

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Tips to Stay Motivated to Exercise

Lack of motivation can be a difficult hurdle to clear when approaching any activity or goal. And that's particularly so with fitness-related goals, as lack of motivation to exercise, which many people find boring and unenjoyable, is an oft-cited reason for living a sedentary lifestyle.

The benefits of exercise, which include decreased risk for chronic disease, weight management, and improved mental health, should be all the motivation anyone needs to get up and go. But some people still need a little help to ensure they stay the course and achieve their fitness goals. People can try these strategies if their motivation to exercise is lacking.

• **Embrace a new routine.** While millions of people can't imagine a day without breaking a sweat at the gym, others find gym-based workouts a little tedious and lacking in excitement. If that outlook sounds familiar, individuals can embrace new exercise routines that engage them. Sports provide great exercise, so adults can look into activities like pickleball, jogging and cycling to break a sweat and get fit. Each of those activities can greatly improve cardiovascular fitness and help people maintain healthy weights.

• **Set small goals along the way to larger ones.** Fitness-related progress does not come overnight, so what appears to be a lack of daily results can make it difficult to stay committed for the long haul. Setting short-term goals along the way to long-term ones can provide all the motivation people need to keep going. For example, if your ultimate goal is to lose 10 pounds, set a one-pound-per-week shorter goal. Being able to measure your progress each week can motivate you to stay the course.

• **Remind yourself why you're looking to get more fit.** There's no bad reason to get fit. Some people who find they lack the motivation to keep going simply need to remind themselves why they started an exercise regimen in the first place. Did you want to shed weight before a class reunion? Get healthy so you can be more active with your children? Exercise more to reduce your risk for a disease or condition that runs in your family? By routinely reminding yourself why you initially set out to get more fit, you may provide that little extra spark you need to stay the course. Set up smartphone notifications as reminders if you feel you need a daily refresher regarding your motivation to exercise.

• **Make it a family affair.** The buddy system is effective in many applications, and it can be particularly good at motivating people to stay the course and achieve their fitness goals. Encourage a spouse, sibling, friend, or even your whole family to join you as you begin your journey to a healthier you. With someone there to get you going each day, you're less likely to skip workouts.

Staying motivated to exercise may not be easy. But there's a number of things people can do to ensure their motivation to get fit does not wane.







What Can Be Done To Reduce Risk of Cancer Recurrence

No one knows what to expect upon being diagnosed with cancer. But advancements in medical research have done wonders to improve outcomes over the last half-century. The Cancer Research Institute reports that the overall five-year survival rate for all cancers reached 70 percent by the end of 2021, a substantial improvement over the 49 percent rate in the mid-1970s.

Higher survival rates should comfort cancer patients and their families. However, patients and family members may still have recurrence in the back of their minds upon the conclusion of successful treatment. In fact, the American Cancer Society notes it's common to wonder about recurrence after surviving cancer. Rates of recurrence vary by type of cancer and the stage at which the cancer was initially diagnosed. While there is no way to guarantee cancer won't return, the ACS notes diet, physical activity, and the right lifestyle choices can be useful allies for those who want to do everything they can to reduce their risk of cancer recurrence.

Physical activity

The ACS reports that survivors who stay physically active typically live longer and have a lower risk of recurrence compared to survivors who do not exercise. Physical activity also reduces a survivor's risk of developing a new form of cancer. Survivors are urged to work with their cancer care teams to develop a physical fitness routine that is safe and effective, but the ACS has its own physical activity guidelines for cancer survivors. Those guidelines are available at https://www.cancer.org/cancer/supportive-care/nutrition-activity-with-cancer/acs-nutrition-and-physical-activity-guideline-for-survivors.html.

Lifestyle choices

Poor lifestyle choices after surviving cancer can increase the risk of recurrence. Various cancers have been linked to alcohol consumption, and the ACS advises against drinking. For those who want to drink, ensure you consume no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men.

Tobacco poses another threat to cancer survivors. The ACS notes survivors who stop smoking have a lower risk of recurrence and are less likely to develop a second cancer compared to those who continue to use tobacco. The ACS also reports that studies consistently indicate that cancer patients who quit smoking survive longer than those who continue to smoke.

While there is no guaranteed way for cancer survivors to prevent the disease from returning, the right choices after a successful treatment can be a useful ally against recurrence.

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The Link Between Sitting and Type 2 Diabetes

The International Diabetes Federation notes that one in nine individuals between the ages of 20 and 79 across the globe are living with diabetes. That equates to roughly 589 million adults, a figure the IDF expects to rise to 853 million adults by 2050.

Risk factors for diabetes are sometimes linked to variables individuals cannot control. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that type 1 diabetes is thought to be a byproduct of an autoimmune reaction. The CDC adds that individuals with a parent or sibling with type 1 diabetes are at greater risk for the disease than individuals with no such family history. But various risk factors for type 2 diabetes, which the Cleveland Clinic notes accounts for more than 90 percent of diabetes cases, often are within individuals' control. Sitting for extended periods of time, not only at work but also during free time, has been linked to type 2 diabetes. A 2015 meta-analysis published in the journal Medicine and Sport Science suggested a large duration of sedentary behavior is associated with a 112 percent greater risk for type 2 diabetes.

So why does sitting affect type 2 diabetes risk? One reason concerns the effects of long periods of sitting on metabolism. In a 2019 interview with Health Matters, endocrinologist Dr. Rekha B. Kumar noted that prolonged sitting required muscles to work less. Active muscles, Dr. Kumar noted, boost metabolism and lead to better blood sugar management. When a body sits for long periods of time, metabolism is adversely affected and the risk for type 2 diabetes increases.

Another way sitting has been linked to type 2 diabetes concerns the effects of sitting on insulin. According to the diaTribe Foundation, which aims to inform about diabetes and advocate for diabetes patients, sitting affects the way muscles respond to insulin, the hormone that reduces the amount of sugar in the blood. When people sit for long periods of time, they may not have the bandwidth to contract their muscles, and that can make it harder to regulate blood sugar. As that happens, people may develop a resistance to insulin that increases their risk for type 2 diabetes.

Surveys from the CDC have indicated that people self-report sitting somewhere between 6.5 to eight hours per day, while other studies suggest heavy screen users may be spending as much as 11 hours per day sitting. That's a potentially dangerous and costly development, but one that people can confront head on by making a concerted effort to spend less time sitting each day.

Physical Therapy Helps People Avoid Surgery

Individuals who are dealing with injuries or chronic pain may seek relief in various ways. Surgery may seem like an inevitable outcome, but advances in medicine have led to more conservative solutions. Physical therapy is a powerful, non-invasive first-line treatment that is increasingly being recommended by health care professionals as a means to address a wide range of conditions.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, physical therapy is a health care specialty that helps restore movement, manage pain and improve physical function. Physical therapists undergo many years of schooling, during which they learn to employ targeted exercises, hands-on care, and patient education to help people heal after surgery, recover from injuries, or manage chronic health conditions.

By targeting structural mechanics, restoring tissue mobility, and addressing underlying movement dysfunctions, physical therapy frequently can resolve complex medical conditions without the risks, costs, and down time associated with surgery. Here are some of the conditions PT can address.

- Herniated or bulging discs: Targeted exercises, such as mechanical traction and spinal extension maneuvers, can help centralize disc material away from compressed nerves, says the Jacksonville Orthopaedic Institute.
- Spinal stenosis: Strengthening of core and pelvic stability muscles can reduce loading on the spinal canal. Manual therapy will help restore joint mechanics to alleviate pain and other symptoms.
- Degenerative disc disease: Physical therapists can help strengthen deep postural stabilizer muscles to create internal support. This can help relieve mechanical stress on intervertebral discs that have worn out.
- Soft tissue injuries: Overuse injuries and tendon degradation can lead to pain that mimics conditions that require surgical repair. These may include achilles tendinopathy, plantar fasciitis, and carpal tunnel syndrome. PT may be an initial treatment option for these conditions.
- Pelvic floor dysfunction: The National Center for Biotechnology Information says pelvic floor dysfunction involves the abnormal activity or function of the pelvic floor musculature. Pelvic floor dysfunction can affect bladder and bowel function and cause pain in the abdomen, including during intercourse. Physical therapy uses biofeedback, internal and external manual techniques, and targeted neuromuscular retraining to strengthen the pelvic basket.
- Joint osteoarthritis: The Cleveland Clinic says osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It happens when the cartilage that cushions the ends of bones in a joint wears down over time. PT can address osteoarthritis in knees, hips, shoulders, and other joints.

Physical therapy can be a powerful tool when patients consistently and actively participate in the treatment. For many, a tailored physical therapy plan provides a path to complete recovery.

Avoid Exercise-Related Injuries

Exercise promotes mental and physical well-being in myriad ways. However, injuries remain a cause for concern for both seasoned and novice exercise enthusiasts.

According to WifiTalents, which provides comprehensive market data and statistics, more than 3.4 million emergency department visits occur for sports and recreation injuries annually in the United States. Roughly 2.5 million injuries occur in gym and workout environments, highlighting the importance of an approach to exercise rooted in injury prevention. Understanding the risk factors and how to manage them can help individuals stay active and safe.



Types of injuries

Exercise injuries tend to be acute injuries or overuse injuries. Acute injuries are sprains or fractures, while overuse injuries include tendinitis or stress fractures. Overuse injuries develop gradually when tissues are repeatedly stressed without affording time for adequate recovery, says Boston Children's Hospital.

Injury prevention

A proper warm-up gradually increases heart rate and improves blood flow to muscles. Experts recommend five to 10 minutes of light aerobic activity before engaging in a more lengthy workout. A similar cool-down period afterwards returns the body to resting levels, says WebMD.

Beginners often do too much too soon. Orthopedic specialists recommend beginning with moderate exercise and gradually building up intensity and duration to allow tissues to adapt. Sudden spikes in training tend to lead to overuse injuries.

It's also important to follow proper form while exercising. WebMD says working with a qualified trainer or coach, even if it's just in the beginning to learn techniques, can help establish safe movement to avoid injury.

Repeating activities day in and day out will stress the same tissues. That is why the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons suggests cross-training. Cross-training alternates between cardio, strength and flexibility workouts to help distribute exercise load in an effort to reduce injuries.

Afford yourself time for recovery

Recovery is when the body repairs and strengthens tissues. Overtraining without proper rest of at least one to two days per week can lead to fatigue and higher injury risk.

If injury occurs

Should an injury occur, it is essential to follow a doctor's orders for rest without returning to activity too soon. Early management follows the RICE protocol: Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation. Exercising through sharp or persistent pain can worsen minor injuries, so it pays to be mindful of what the body is saying, says Just Move Athletic Clubs. Most minor injuries improve within a few weeks, but persistent symptoms should be addressed with a medical professional.

Exercise is highly beneficial, and the risk of injury should not deter people from physical activity. Instead, following key prevention strategies can dramatically reduce injury risk, even for beginners.

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