

HealthyLife[®]

LETTER

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QUICK FACTS ABOUT sodium

Everyone needs some sodium. It helps with the body's fluids, muscles and nerves. But most people eat too much. Here's why cutting back can do you some good:

Eating less sodium can lower the risk of a heart attack, heart failure, stroke and kidney disease.

If people lowered sodium intake to 1,500 mg per day, fewer people would die of heart disease. Up to 1.2 million people could be saved over the next 10 years.

About 70 percent of people's sodium comes from processed foods like chips, cookies and crackers, not the salt shaker!

Source: American Heart Association

Knees hurt *during exercise?*

Knee pain can happen for many different reasons. But if you notice pain in the front of the knee during sports, jumping or running, you could have patellofemoral pain syndrome, also known as runner's knee.



WHAT DOES RUNNER'S KNEE FEEL LIKE?

Runner's knee usually has one or more of these symptoms:

- The kneecap hurts when you touch it.
- It feels like the kneecap is grinding or clicking when you move it.
- The kneecap or front of the knee hurts after you've been active.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Runner's knee is common in athletes, especially young adults and females. It may be caused by:

- Tight muscles in the legs, especially the hamstrings and Achilles tendons
- A kneecap that is slightly out of place
- Thigh muscles that are too weak
- Wearing shoes with poor support during exercise
- Exercising too hard or too long

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT RUNNER'S KNEE

Runner's knee often feels better with home care. Try these tips:

- Use ice packs on the knee for up to 20 minutes, several times a day.
- Replace the activity that hurts the knee with lower impact activities.
- Lightly wrap the knee in an elastic bandage.
- Rest the knee when you can, lifting it up higher than the heart.
- Take ibuprofen or naproxen for more bothersome pain, but ask a doctor before taking it more than seven days.

PREVENTION MATTERS

You can help prevent runner's knee if you:

- Stretch all your muscles, especially the legs, before and after exercise.
- Do a warm-up before you start vigorous workouts.
- Increase your exercise slowly.
- Maintain a healthy weight to reduce knee stress.

See a doctor if knee pain doesn't get better with a few days of rest and home care. Your doctor can recommend physical therapy, shoe inserts or other treatments to help. Always ask your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

Aging in place for older adults

Many people have a loved one who is an older adult. Sometimes an older adult may wish to stay in their home as they get older. This is possible for many older adults with some support from family members or friends.



Here are some ways to help an older loved one stay in their home:

- **Be sure they can get around.** Some adults may need a walker or electric scooter. Sometimes Medicare will help cover the cost of these mobility aids.



- **Help them find things to do.** It can be boring and lonely at home alone. Help them learn how to do video calls with family and friends. When it's safe to do so, help them get involved at a local senior center.

- **Get them daytime help if needed.** Some people may need help with personal care, such as washing their hair. If a family member can't be there each day, consider hiring a trained aide that can help them with everyday needs.
- **Consider an emergency alert system.** This can call for help if your loved one falls or gets hurt.
- **Keep nutrition in mind.** Be sure your loved one can get healthy food from the grocery store. Consider meal delivery services in your area that may be free or low-cost.

- **Make sure they go to appointments.** Regular checkups are important, especially if the person has any health conditions. Drive them to their appointments if needed.
- **Check up on bills.** Make sure their bills for insurance, utilities and other needs are getting paid on time. Find out what bills they have and offer to help get them organized and paid. Talk to them about scams, too. Tell them not to give out their social security number or other information to anyone over the phone.



- **Get rid of fall hazards.** Consider ramps instead of stairs at the front door. Put grab bars in showers and bathtubs. Put plenty of night lights around their house and remove loose rugs from the floor. Encourage them to wear supportive shoes or non-slip socks around the house.

Source: National Institute on Aging