

# UC Health & Wellness Newsletter

August 2016

## BACK FACTS:

With summer here, it is not surprising that more of us are being active. The American Heart Association states *anything* that makes your body move and burn calories, counts as physical activity! Unfortunately, about 80% of the population will have back pain at least once in their lifetime, which can really limit their physical activity. It is also the most common reason people go to the doctor. Did you know that the following can increase your risk for back pain?

- \***Heredity** - having a specific form of arthritis called ankylosing spondylitis. This type of arthritis can be passed on genetically
- \***Age** - back pain can start, for some, as early as in their 30s.
- \***Fitness level** - being inactive or in poor physical shape puts you at risk.
- \***Overweight** - too much weight can add pressure to your back.
- \***Work** - prolonged sitting or repetitive movements can put you at risk.
- \***Being a smoker** reduces the amount of nutrients delivered to the spinal nerves and weakens that area. Also, having what is called 'Smoker's Cough' can lead to back pain.

Once a physician diagnoses someone with low back pain, he or she may recommend one, or a combination of several conservative treatments such as physical therapy, strengthening exercises, physical activity, hot or cold packs, medications, acupuncture, or other individualized treatments. Surgery would be considered as a last option if all else fails.

The good news is that many of the factors that contribute to back pain are preventable. Engaging in a healthy lifestyle is key to a healthy back!

Our bodies are made to move throughout the day. Whether you sit or stand, make sure you are taking movement breaks. In addition, you can start incorporating the following:

- \***Exercise** - although people may feel hesitant to exercise when experiencing back pain, it actually can help with the healing process. Inactivity can cause muscle spasms and sometimes exacerbate the back pain.
- \***Strengthening and Stretching** - incorporating exercises to strengthen the core (stomach muscles) area will help keep your back strong. Also, be sure to stretch after every workout. Stretching will feel good and help to increase your range of motion and decrease the likelihood of injury.

Whether you have experienced back pain or not, remember that lifestyle modification can help prevent it. If you are currently inactive, start slowly with strengthening and stretching exercises. Then, add in some moderate intensity exercise such as walking\*.

Always make sure to warm up before exercising. In the end, moving daily will help keep your back healthy. *\*Please consult with your physician prior to starting an exercise program.*

Interactive Health August 2016 Jeannie Buckman, M.S., Health Coach



The following five exercises provide an easy, time efficient routine to strengthen the core and decrease the risk of back pain. Start with one set of each and increase as you get stronger.

**Glute Bridge** - Lie on back with feet hip width apart and flat on floor. Contract abs to flatten low back into the floor. While keeping your abs engaged, lift hips off floor without arching back and hold. Slowly lower to start, repeat.

**Front Plank** - Lie on stomach, elbows close to sides, under shoulders, palms down, fingers facing forward. Engage abs, contract thigh muscles to straighten legs strongly, toes tucked under. Lift torso/thighs off floor, hold 10 secs. Lower to start, repeat.

**Hip Rotations** - Start in push up position, abs engaged/back level. Bend and bring one knee into same side armpit. Repeat on both sides. Next bring knee to opposite side armpit.

**Cobra** - Lie on stomach, hands under shoulders, fingers forward. Legs straight, toes pointed. Engage abs and press hips into floor while lifting chest up, keeping hips on mat. Hold 15 - 30 seconds.

**Contralateral Limb Raises** - Lie on stomach, legs outstretched, and toes pointing behind. Reach arms overhead, palms facing each other. Deepen ab muscles and slowly lift one arm a few inches off the floor. Repeat this with one leg. Perform same motion lifting one arm with opposing leg.

Resources:

[www.acefitness.org](http://www.acefitness.org)

[www.spinehealth.com](http://www.spinehealth.com)

## Cutting Through the Hype: How Do I Know What to Eat?

Health claims you can ignore...

**“Multigrain”** only means that there is more than one grain in the product. Look for whole grain on the ingredient list for healthier option.

**“All Natural”** essentially has no meaning in regard to packaged foods.

**“A Full Serving of Vegetables”** means this is factory made food. Eat the real thing!

**Watch out for “fat free” items.** In processing a host of additional chemicals were added, including salt and sugar, making it a less healthy choice than the original version.

Be wary of products with added nutrients or are **“fortified”**. For example, if you’re looking for antioxidants, it’s best to eat foods naturally high in them instead of a manufactured version.

**Foods with more than 5 ingredients are considered “highly processed”.** Ingredients are listed in the order of highest to lowest amounts. You will see that sugar is often high on the list or listed multiple times as some version of sugar .

Paleo? Atkins? Vegan? Mediterranean?

Scientific Publisher, *Annual Reviews*, compared the medical evidence for and against every mainstream diet. At the end of the day, they found that, while no single diet rose to the top, the healthiest eating styles embraced similar concepts: plant based, minimally processed, moderately proportioned.

Excerpted from Excellus August 2014 Wellness Newsletter

## Can You Eat Foods Past the ‘Sell By’ Date?

The vast majority of food date labels, including “sell by,” “use by” and “best if used by,” are food manufacturers’ suggestions for peak freshness and taste, rather than indicators of food safety or health concerns. Such labels can be difficult to navigate, though, because the definitions of the terms aren’t standardized, and labeling practices can vary by product type and manufacturer.

As a general rule, most foods can be consumed days, weeks or even months past the dates printed on packaging. “Our bodies are well equipped to detect when food is spoiled,” said Dana Gunders, a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an advocacy group. “The food will taste funny or smell bad, or look slimy.” In most cases, she said, the worst that might happen is that you’ll get a stomachache from food that has gone bad.

An important exception, Ms. Gunders said, is food that has grown moldy, since some types of mold can produce toxins. She recommends you freeze foods like sliced bread that you won’t finish within a few days and store cheese in wax paper, which will keep it fresh longer than plastic wrap will.

Most food-borne illness occurs when food has been contaminated by a pathogen on the farm or at a processing plant, rather than from the natural process of decay or aging. Foods whose labeling dates you should pay particular attention to are the same ones pregnant women are cautioned to avoid, since they may harbor listeria, which unlike most bacteria can grow under refrigeration. Such foods include deli meats, unpasteurized dairy products, ready-to-eat

refrigerated foods, and hot dogs and sausages that aren’t fully cooked.

Pasteurized dairy products tend to be among the safest foods; use the sniff test for products like milk. Eggs can be eaten three to five weeks after the “use by” date, Ms. Gunders said. A quick trick is to drop an egg in a glass of water: It will float if it’s bad and sink if it’s good.

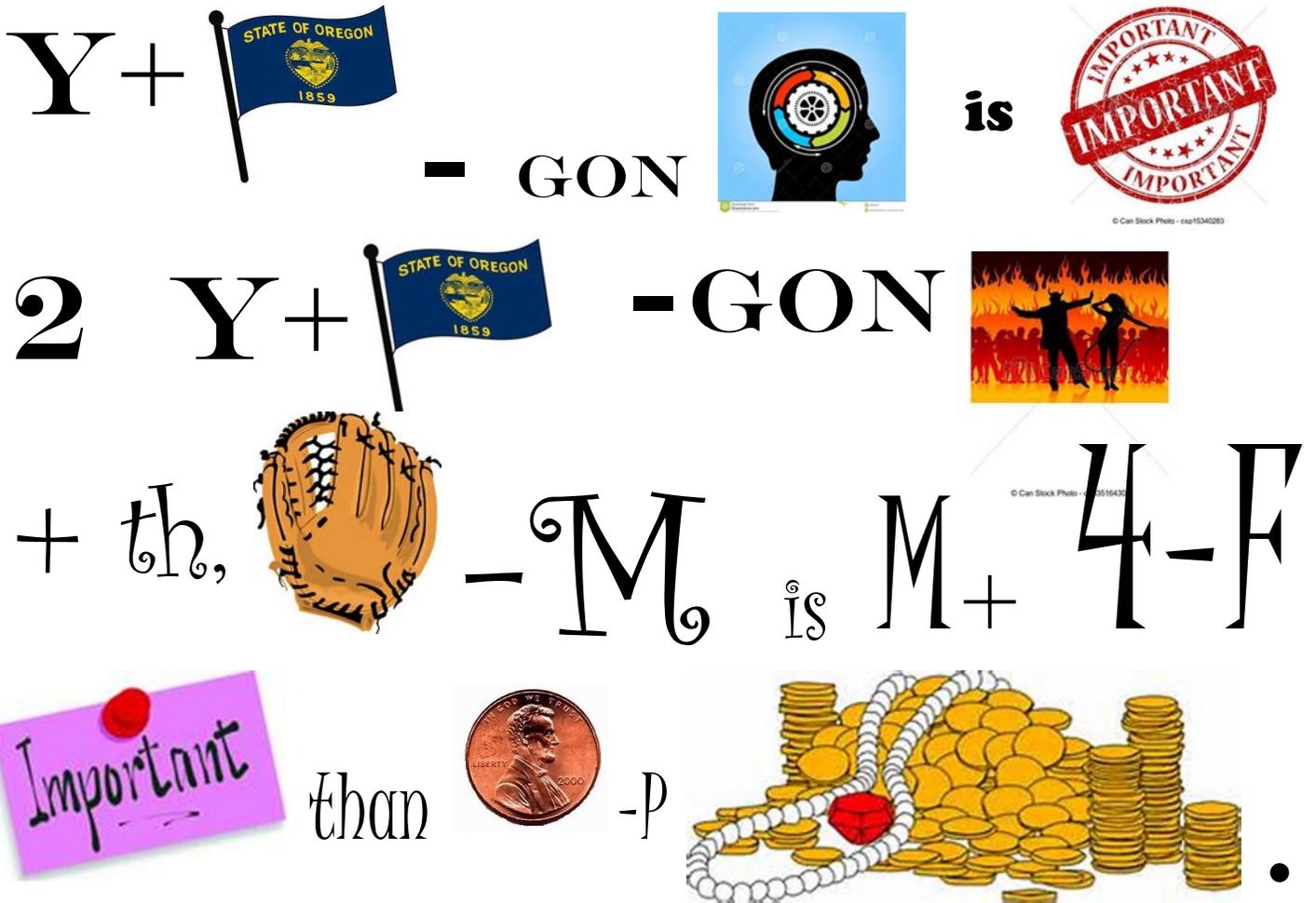
More food storage tips can be found in the food storage directory at [savethefood.com](http://savethefood.com), a public service campaign sponsored by the NRDC and the Ad Council.

To address consumer confusion and reduce waste, a proposed bill called the Food Date Labeling Act seeks to create a uniform national date labeling system with just two labels: one for quality, “best if used by,” and one for safety, “expires on.”

“Ask Well” NYTimes 7.15.16



**Did you know that wax paper is better than plastic wrap for storing many foods? The plastic traps moisture which could lead to spoilage.**



*Solve the rebus! ONE entry per person, please. Submit your answer no later than 5pm on Wednesday, Aug. 3rd to Caren at [cbsummers@utica.edu](mailto:cbsummers@utica.edu)*



*Upcoming Activities - all listed [HERE](#)*

[Black River Outdoor Education Family Day](#) Sunday, August, 14th 10-1pm

[UC Knitting Club-1st meeting](#) August 16th in Strebel Lounge 12:30-1:30pm

Farmers Market/[Flu Shot Clinic](#) Monday, September 19th 10-3pm

[Chair Massages](#) begin Friday, October 21st 10-2pm *(reserve your favorite time)*

["Get a Buddy/Be a Buddy"](#) **Help Motivate Someone or Get a Motivation Nudge !**

**Be Active! Be Involved! Be Healthy!**