

LiveHealthy



A wellness publication for our Blue Advantage (PPO) members

Alabama

Hormonal Differences *as we* Age

Fall 2017

**Medicare Open
Enrollment**
Important
Dates Inside

**Fall
Fitness**
Staying Fit in
Colder Weather

**Healthy
Tailgating**
Fall Foods for
Entertaining

**Managing
Your Pain**
Without
Pills!

How Are We Doing?

We welcome your feedback on the articles in *Live Healthy Alabama*.

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BY THE NUMBERS

4 WE ARE A 4-STAR PLAN!

Today, we are the highest-rated Medicare Advantage plan available statewide.



KNOW THE ODDS

According to the National Safety Council 2017 Injury Facts Report, here are your odds for dying from the following situations:

1 in 63,225

- Your odds of dying from bee sting
 - 1 in 44,086** — Your odds of dying from a poisonous plant or animal
 - 1 in 647** — Your odds of dying from crossing a street
 - 1 in 7** — Your odds of dying from heart disease or cancer.
- Understand your odds and what's truly risky. Your odds of getting heart disease and certain forms of cancer can be reduced by quitting smoking, eating healthy and getting enough exercise.



2 million

The number of antibiotic-resistant infections that occur each year.

In outpatient settings, **1 in 3** prescribed antibiotics are unnecessary. Most unnecessary antibiotics are prescribed for viral respiratory illnesses such as bronchitis, ear infections, sinus infections or the common cold. *Source: The Journal of the American Medical Association, May 2016*



A woman **may reduce her risk** of abdominal obesity by

35%



if she stands for one-quarter of her day, according to new research from the American Cancer Society. Stand for one-half of your day and your risk declines **47%.**

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On the cover

Health concerns between men and women differ as a rule, but the gap widens after age 50. Go to page 2 to learn more.





MY FITNESS



Ch-ch-ch-ch **CHANGES!**



In his hit song, “Changes,” David Bowie famously sang the lines, “Time may change me, but I can’t change time.”

As time marches forward, we all experience many changes. There will be fluctuations in hormone levels, changes in bone density, in our skin, our organs, and changes in our overall healthcare needs. In the pages that follow, we take a look at how these changes in our healthcare needs may affect different populations along gender lines.



Hormones and the Aging Female Body



Let's talk about menopause.

Menopause, strictly defined, is when a woman's body completely stops having menstrual cycles. It can happen for a woman as early as in her 40s or as late as in her 60s, but the average age a woman experiences menopause is 51 in the United States.

While menopause is typically a normal response to aging, it can also happen earlier for some women due to other reasons like hysterectomy, chemotherapy or radiation therapy, or primary ovarian insufficiency, which is when a woman's ovaries fail to produce normal levels of reproductive hormones.



In the years leading up to menopause, a woman often experiences a time referred to as perimenopause. This can last months or years, and women may experience the following symptoms during this time:



- Irregular periods
- Hot flashes
- Night sweats
- Sleep changes
- Feelings of sadness or loss
- Reduced energy
- Increased moodiness and irritability

- Weight gain from a slowing metabolism
- Thinning of hair and skin
- Vaginal dryness or irritation
- Decrease in volume of breast tissue

Some women have regular periods every month right up to their last period, but this is rare. For most women, the process is a little more gradual. Skipped periods or having periods every other month or so is fairly common. But just because a woman is going through perimenopause doesn't mean she can't get pregnant. Right up to her very last period, pregnancy is possible.

Once menopause has occurred, most women can stay healthy, vital and sexual. In fact, some women find menopause a relief because they no longer need to worry about getting pregnant.

That said, a woman's risk of certain ailments increases after menopause, including:



- Heart disease
- Incontinence
- Osteoporosis

Other post-menopausal problems may include a loss or reduction of sexual function and weight gain.

As you age and your hormones change, it's always a good idea to work closely with your doctor. Before going in for office visits, be sure to prepare yourself by:

- Keeping track of symptoms.
- Writing down any questions and bring a notebook for answers.
- Making a list of any medications, supplements, herbs or vitamins you may take to share with your doctor.

Speaking of supplements, be careful! Many common supplements such as red clover, kava, DHEA, primrose oil, dong quai and wild yam have not been scientifically proven to be useful for treatment and, in some cases, may actually put you at risk. Supplements are not regulated by any governing agency, so therapeutic doses are hard to measure. Also, effectiveness and potential negative side effects are not always well-documented.

Typically, menopause will not require any medical treatment. However, if your changing hormones become overly problematic, a doctor may prescribe treatments including:

- Medications to treat osteoporosis
- Vaginal estrogen
- Estrogen replacement therapy
- Gabapentin (Neurontin)
- Low-dose antidepressants



Even without medical intervention, there are ways to make the symptoms of your changing hormones more bearable.

- Cool your hot flashes with cool glasses of water, by chewing ice, or keeping the room cool. Understand that substances such as caffeine, spicy food, and alcohol can trigger hot flashes.
- Sleep well. Avoid caffeine, especially later in the day, and get a good night's sleep as often as possible. If hot flashes bother your sleep, consider taking short naps during the day when possible.
- Strengthen your pelvic floor and reduce incontinence by doing Kegel exercises.
- Eat a healthy diet primarily consisting of nutritious fruits and veggies. Be sure to get enough calcium to keep your bones healthy.
- Exercise at least 30 minutes a day, five times a week, or longer if you're up to it. Staying physically fit keeps your bones strong and can help you maintain a healthy weight.
- Consider using a vaginal lubricant or moisturizer to decrease any discomfort. Avoid products with glycerin which can increase irritation.

Remember, you should always work with your doctor to find the best and safest treatments for symptoms related to perimenopause, menopause or post-menopause.

Hormones and the Aging Male Body



Male hormonal changes due to aging occur gradually over time.



Men's testosterone levels drop after the age of 30, but it's at an average rate of one percent per year. So this change is usually very slow. This creates a drastically different experience than what women experience during menopause when their reproductive cycles change quickly and permanently.

Physical changes to the male body due to changing hormones, specifically reduced testosterone, include issues with:

- **Reproductive Health**

This particular health issue tends to get the most press coverage by a long shot. A reduction in testosterone can lead to a loss of desire, erectile dysfunction and infertility.

- **Sleeping Patterns**

If your body isn't producing enough testosterone, you may find yourself feeling sleepier than usual. You may suffer insomnia or notice changes in your sleep patterns leading you to feel less well-rested.

- **Physical Changes**

Feeling less muscular and a little flabbier may be a sign of reduced testosterone. A change in hormones can lead to reduced bone density, swollen or tender breasts (gynecomastia) and you may even find yourself losing body hair. Some men even experience hot flashes.

- **Emotions**

As hormones change, you may find yourself more irritable than you used to be. Some men experience depression, a loss of confidence.



Any combination of these symptoms may be signs of andropause, which is the scientific term for a collection of symptoms more commonly referred to as “male menopause.” Additional medical terms for this condition may include testosterone deficiency syndrome, late-onset male hypogonadism or androgen deficiency.

But no matter what name you use to describe the condition, it isn’t as well-understood or as easily defined as female menopause. Testosterone levels vary greatly, and what is fine for one guy may not be enough for another. Some men may test below what is considered normal and not have any symptoms. In such cases, no treatment is necessary.

However, if you are bothered by any of these symptoms, contact your doctor. The only way to properly diagnose issues related to hormones conclusively is through blood tests.

It’s important to fully define the reason for your issues before being prescribed treatment because many underlying factors may be to blame. You may be experiencing side effects from medication, a change in brain chemistry like depression, thyroid issues, or obstructive sleep apnea. If your reduced testosterone is due to any of these issues, usually testosterone levels can return back to normal once the underlying condition is treated.

Treating low testosterone with hormone replacement therapy (HRT) may be useful for some men, but this

treatment is controversial and not recommended in all situations. Testosterone replacement can increase your risk of heart attack, prostate cancer or cause other health problems. Any treatment plan involving HRT should be closely monitored by your doctor.

Here are a few steps to consider if you are experiencing bothersome symptoms possibly attributed to a reduced level of testosterone:

- **Be honest.**

Talk to your doctor and let them know everything that’s going on. Explain all of your symptoms, even if some are embarrassing. This will help your doctor better prescribe a treatment plan.

- **Be healthy.**

Eat a healthy diet primarily composed of nutritious fruits and vegetables. Exercise at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Incorporate strength-training as well as cardiovascular exercises. Maintain a healthy weight.

- **Get help.**

Depression and other mental conditions can cause physical symptoms which mimic reduced testosterone. Anxiety and depression may cause increased irritability and aggression. Often men will try to self-medicate with alcohol or abuse other substances instead of dealing with the root issue. If you are experiencing depression, anxiety or any other mental issues, don’t be afraid to reach out for some counseling.





What You Need to Know About **Fall Allergies**

Jaws 2 had a famous promotional tagline: “Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water...” Well, “Just when you thought it was safe to go back outside...” is a good tagline for the sequel to your spring allergy season, known as the fall allergy season. Round two of allergies for the year can be just as annoying as the first round.

On the following page you will find information about the symptoms of fall allergies, their causes, and how to prevent and manage your symptoms.

Need help finding Primary Care?

Call customer service or check out *AlabamaBlue.com*.



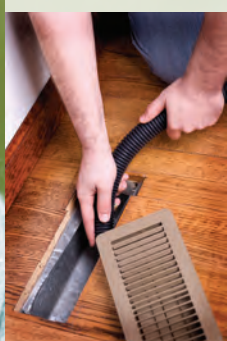
Common symptoms of fall allergies:

- Itchy, watery eyes
- Coughing
- Running, itchy nose
- Dark circles under your eyes
- Sneezing



Common causes of fall allergies

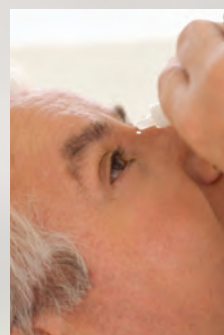
- **Ragweed pollen** – Three-quarters of people allergic to spring plants are also allergic to ragweed. This common airborne substance is by far one of the most common allergy triggers.
- **Mold spores** – Falling leaves land on the ground where they often sit and collect moisture. Decomposing wet leaves are fertile ground for molds and fungi.
- **Dust mites** – These are a problem all year in many homes. However, they often get kicked into the air the first time you turn on your heater in the fall.



Prevention is the best medicine:

- Stay inside and close your doors and windows during peak pollen times (around midday).
- Clean your air vents and change your filter before turning on your heater for the first time in the fall. Mold and other allergens can get trapped inside your furnace during summer months.
- If possible, use HEPA filters in your heating system to remove mold spores, dust, pollen and other particles before they get circulated into the air.

- Vacuum carpets once a week during peak allergy season, twice a week or more if you have pets who go outside.
- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when raking leaves to prevent inhaling hidden mold spores.



How to manage an allergy flare-up:

- **Steroid nasal sprays** – These medicines can reduce inflammation in the nose. Some brands are available over-the-counter; others may require a prescription.
- **Antihistamines** – This class of drugs is known to stop sneezing and itching associated with allergies.
- **Decongestants** – These medicines can help clear your head by drying up drainage and mucus.
- **Eye drops** – These can be used to help relieve itchy, watery eyes. Many brands contain an antihistamine.
- **Immunotherapy** – This form of therapy is a way of gradually exposing you to your allergens until your body develops a tolerance. This usually comes in the form of allergy shots, tablets or drops prescribed or applied by a healthcare professional in the office.

NOTE: Many allergy medications are available over-the-counter without a prescription. However, it's always a good idea to talk to your doctor to make sure you are taking the right medicines for you. If your allergies become more frequent or bothersome, consider making an appointment to discuss your symptoms with your doctor.



Fall Fitness

Sure, swimsuit season may be over for the year, but that doesn't mean you should just let yourself go. Fall in Alabama is one of the most comfortable times of year to get up, get out and get moving. The often unbearable heat and humidity of an Alabama summer fades as cooler breezes blow in from the west. Leaves begin to turn vibrant hues of red and yellow to show off the diversity of nature's palate. The pleasant weather may call you outside, so answer that call.

And if you're looking for a fun place to enjoy watching the leaves change, you're in luck!

"Alabama the Beautiful" is full of scenic wonders.

ALABAMA FALL EXCURSIONS

Monte Sano State Park

Next time you visit Huntsville, enjoy an afternoon hike and picnic in this state park in the mountains overlooking the Rocket City.



Billy Pope

Little River Canyon National Preserve

Enjoy a scenic drive along the canyon rim and stop at the many scenic overlooks. In addition to the grandeur of the canyon, there are waterfalls and numerous stops with short hikes for visitors to enjoy.



Russell Brown

Tannehill Ironworks Historical State Park

Take a step back in time and enjoy an easy walk on a bridge over a roaring stream, explore historic cabins and churches, and view the massive stone furnaces. Be sure to visit The Iron & Steel Museum of Alabama and learn more about the rich history of the steel industry.



Ted Tucker

Desoto State Park

This north Alabama destination offers beautiful hikes past waterfalls in addition to many great camping and picnicking opportunities.



Brittney M. Hughes

Oak Mountain State Park

Alabama's largest state park offers a lot to do: hang out beside the lake and fish for bass; hike up the Blue Trail to King's Chair for an awe-inspiring view of the Pelham Valley below; or enjoy a short trek down to Peavine Gorge and Falls.



Billy Pope

Gulf State Park

Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores, Alabama, offers visitors two miles of scenic white sand beaches perfect for collecting shells, swimming in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, or watching sea birds..



David Rainer



ADCNR Photo



No matter where you go or what you do this fall, be sure to move your body and enjoy the many benefits of an active lifestyle. Most doctors recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of exercise a day for optimum health and longevity.



Find Your Balance

Did you know that 2.5 million senior Americans visit the emergency room for injuries caused by falls?

As our bodies get older, even minor injuries can sometimes cause big problems. Yoga, stretching and similar forms of exercise can help you improve your sense of balance and increase flexibility. This can reduce your risk for injury.

There are two primary types of exercises and stretches you can do to help improve balance, increase strength, and help prevent falls.

- 1) **Static stretches** are stretches where you hold still.
- 2) **Dynamic stretches** are stretches involving movement. This quick and easy routine can be done daily and involves both static and dynamic moves designed to help you feel better and prevent injury.

Static Stretches *Try and hold each exercise 20-30 seconds on each side and repeat two to three times.*

Wrist Stretch



Hamstring Stretch



Shoulder Stretch



Quad Stretch



Easy

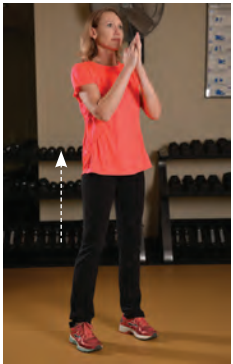


Advanced

All of these exercises can help you improve balance, strengthen your core and be performed every day. Also, these exercises can easily be altered to adjust for more or less intensity.

Dynamic Movements *Do each exercise 15-20 times and try to complete three rounds.*

Squat



Step 1 - Upright

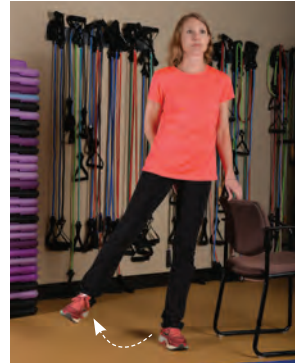


Step 2 - Bending knees

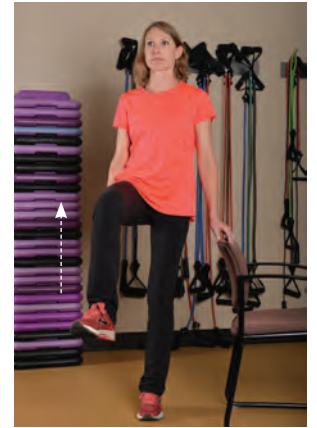


Step 3 - Full squat

Hip Opener

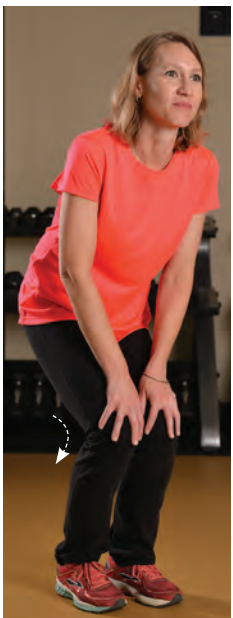


Outward motion

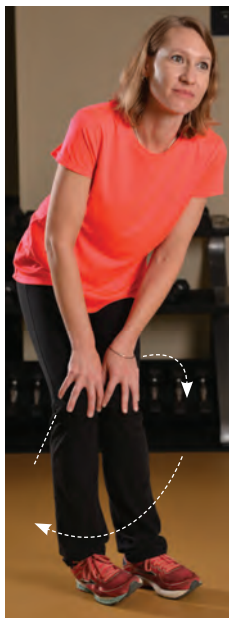


Upward motion

Ankle and Knee Rotation



Step 1 - Bending knees



Step 2 - Adding rotation

Core Twists



Easy



Advanced - Steps 1 and 2



Healthy Tailgating

Football season is here again. No matter what colors you wear—orange and blue or crimson and white—there's one thing all fans can agree on: the importance of the food at the game. Whether it be a sweet treat, a salty snack or a full-on grilled meal, these dishes are sure to score a touchdown for you during halftime.

If you have recipe or tailgating ideas that you'd like to share, please send them to LiveHealthyAL@bcbsal.org!



The Appetizer **Game-Changing** **Guacamole**

A perfect choice for game day! This healthy and colorful dip is full of vitamin C and heart-healthy oils thanks to its primary ingredient: avocado.

Ingredients

½ C diced onion
2 tsp. lemon or lime juice
(to taste)
2 minced cloves garlic
One diced avocado
¼ C chopped cilantro
1 diced jalapeno pepper
1 diced tomato
Dash of salt

Simply mash ingredients together in a bowl and serve with baked tortilla chips for a delicious and heart-healthy game day snack.



Your Main Course

Kabobs for Everyone

Put it on a stick and slap it on the grill. Those are the basic instructions for these versatile vittles. You can make them with the vegetable and meat of your choice. Mushrooms, onions, and peppers, along with diced beef or chicken are the most well-known combo, but there are infinite variations. Try diced squash, cherry tomatoes, pork, lamb or even a firm fish such as fresh tuna or salmon. We've included a suggested recipe, but feel free to make it your own.

Ingredients

- 1 pound diced chicken
- 1 onion cut into large chunks
- 1 green pepper cut into square slices
- 1 red pepper cut into square slices
- 1 package cherry tomatoes
- 1 pound mushrooms

Cut all the ingredients and put them on skewers. Season with your favorite Greek seasoning, barbecue rub, or marinade them with your favorite marinade 30 minutes prior to grilling. Place skewers on hot grill and turn frequently until chicken is cooked thoroughly and vegetables are charred to perfection.

A Sweet Treat

Parfait

Instead of an unhealthy cake or ice cream, consider a parfait for a sweet after-dinner treat. Like kabobs, the variations of this sweet treat are nearly endless. Choose your favorite fruits, add in some granola or crushed up graham crackers for a little crunchy texture, and select your favorite plain or vanilla yogurt as the sweet base. Here's a suggested simple parfait perfect for a summer day.

Ingredients

- Vanilla-flavored Greek yogurt (optional: use low fat or sugar-free yogurt)
- Granola
- Fresh blackberries

Layer ingredients in a serving glass: yogurt, then granola and then blackberries. Repeat layers until glass is full and serve cold.





Medicare Open Enrollment: *What You Need to Know*

We get your calls, and we hear you. Medicare enrollment periods can be confusing. There's initial enrollment, general enrollment, annual election periods and special enrollment. But what do all these terms mean?

In this article, we hope to clarify some terms and give you the basic information you need to help you make informed decisions related to your Medicare coverage options.

A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a light blue polo shirt. He is smiling and looking down at a silver calculator he is holding in his hands. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

Medicare Parts

Medicare benefits are available in different packages, or “Parts.”

Part A

This is sometimes called “Original Medicare” and consists of hospital coverage. This covers inpatient hospital care, inpatient skilled nursing facilities, hospice and home health.

Part B

This is also part of “Original Medicare.” It provides your medical coverage for services, including:

- Doctor visits
 - Lab services
 - Outpatient services
 - Preventive care
 - Screenings
 - Surgical care
 - Durable medical equipment
 - Physical therapy
 - Occupational therapy
-

Part C

This is sometimes called a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan. These plans combine Medicare Parts A and B and may contain Part D (drug) coverage creating what’s known as a Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plan (MA-PD). Blue Advantage is an example of an MA-PD.

Part D

This is your prescription drug coverage. These can be purchased as a stand-alone Part D Prescription Drug Plan (PDP), such as BlueRx, or it can be combined as part of an MA-PD, like Blue Advantage.

BlueRx (PDP) is a Medicare approved Part D plan. Enrollment in BlueRx (PDP) depends on CMS contract renewal.



Enrollment Periods

Automatic Enrollment

If you already receive Medicare benefits prior to age 65 due to disability or through the Railroad Retirement Board, you will automatically be enrolled in Medicare Part A and will automatically receive Medicare Part B if you enrolled when you signed up for your retirement benefits.

Initial Enrollment Period (IEP)

This special period starts three months before your 65th birthday and lasts until seven months after that birthday. You have to sign up for Medicare during this time unless you qualify for automatic enrollment.

General Enrollment

This happens every January 1 through March 31. This is when you can enroll in Medicare Parts A and B if you missed your IEP or were not automatically registered. If you apply during General Enrollment, your Medicare coverage will become effective in July of that year.

Annual Election Period (AEP)

This happens every fall and runs from October 15 until January 7 of the following year. You can make changes to your Medicare coverage and opt-in, opt-out, or change your Medicare Part C and D coverage during this time.

Special Disenrollment Period

This is sometimes called the Medicare Advantage Disenrollment Period (MADP). It takes place from January 1 through February 14. This only applies to those who are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan. During this time, you can add or drop drug coverage when switching back over to Original Medicare. If you already have Original Medicare, you cannot make any changes during this time.

Original Medicare refers to when someone has traditional Medicare A and B coverage and **does not** have a Medicare Advantage plan administering their benefits.

Important Annual Dates



**October 15 to
December 7**
Annual Election
Period (AEP)



January 1
Effective date for
coverage (if enrolled
during AEP)



If you need more information about Blue Advantage or C Plus enrollment, please visit www.bcbsalmedicare.com/sales/web/medicare. If you or someone you know need to sign up for Medicare, visit www.SocialSecurity.gov, or give Social Security a toll-free call at **1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-0778)**, Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.



**January 1 to
February 14**

Medicare Advantage
Disenrollment Period

During this period, members can disenroll from a Medicare Advantage Plan and go back to Original Medicare. If they disenroll, they can enroll in a Medicare Supplement and a standalone Part D plan. However, enrolling in both or either of the two is optional.



July 1

Effective date for
coverage (if enrolled
during General
Enrollment)



Managing Your Pain *Without Pills*

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, 26 percent of Americans fight chronic pain every day. Of those who fight pain, more than half of those with chronic pain have it due to arthritis or a related condition.

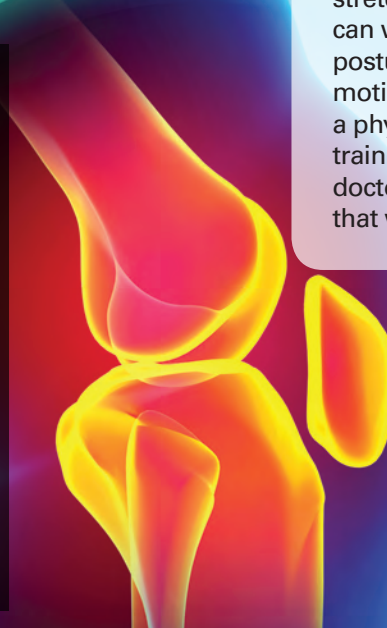
There are many pain pills at your local pharmacy available over-the-counter or with a prescription, and many of these pills offer effective and safe relief when taken as instructed by a healthcare provider. However, there are always risks and side effects with any medicine. Therefore, many people opt for alternative forms of treatment.

While you should always take medicine as prescribed, the options described below are completely natural, non-habit forming and have fewer side effects than traditional pharmaceutical options for pain relief. Remember, you should always talk to your doctor before making any changes to an existing treatment plan.



Exercise and/or physical therapy

We're all familiar with the term "no pain, no gain," but did you know sometimes the very exercises we fear may make our pain go away? Strength training, stretching and aerobic exercises can work together to improve posture, strength, range of motion and reduce pain. Consult a physical therapist or personal trainer (and don't forget your doctor!) to find a training routine that works for you.



Proper shoes

Believe it or not, many sources of musculoskeletal pain can be reduced by simply switching to more comfortable shoes. This is especially true for those suffering with osteoarthritis pain. Flexible sneakers with good arch support can reduce the force exerted on your knee joints and reduce pain.



Meditation

It sounds like hippie-stuff, but it's really not. Meditation is simply controlling one's thoughts in an orderly way. Focusing the mind on an object or idea outside of your pain changes your brain's focus. By changing the brain's focus (often through breathing exercises, progressive relaxation or guided imaging), you can actually lessen how much your brain registers pain. Plus, meditation can reduce stress, and reducing stress reduces chemicals in the body that produce inflammation.



Heat/cold therapy

Heating pads, warm compresses and hot baths can relax your mind and your muscles. This relaxation reduces pain. Cold therapy, through ice packs or packs of frozen vegetables can be used to reduce swelling and pain from various forms of inflammation.



Topical medications

While technically a pharmaceutical solution, these may be a safer alternative to traditional pills. Instead of treating your whole body through a pill or injection, a topical medicine⁹¹ is applied to only the area of the body where you are feeling the pain. This can lessen side effects which may affect other parts of the body, such as organs. Sodium channel blockers like lidocaine often work well for diabetic neuropathy and other nerve pain. If your pain is caused by inflammation, such as the pain from arthritis, there are many topical non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) available to try.

While many forms of pain may be treated without pills, there are no one-size-fits all solutions. Every case is different. Always keep in mind that if you suffer chronic pain, the most important thing you can do is contact your doctor and determine the source of your pain. Once a diagnosis is established, work with your doctor to create a treatment plan unique to you and your individual needs.

5 tips for a *Less Painful* Winter

People with joint or arthritis pain often swear their pain is their own personal weather station. They can feel changes in the barometric pressure as the warm days of summer turn into cooler days of fall. There's even some science and research to back up these assertions. It appears the lower the barometer drops, the more pain increases.

*You can't control the weather.
So, what **can** you do?*

1 WEAR WARM CLOTHES. This one almost seems like a no-brainer. Gloves and extra layers — such as woven knit tights for the legs — can help protect your joints from the elements, keep those joints from getting cold and stiff, and reduce your pain in the process. Also, knowing how unpredictable Alabama falls and winters can be, it's never a bad idea to wear layers. While the morning may be achingly cold and require more clothes, it may be warm and sunny t-shirt weather by lunchtime. Dress appropriately.



2 DRINK PLENTY OF WATER. Even mild dehydration can cause joints to swell and create increased pain. Winter weather also tends to be drier weather, so drink plenty of water and stay hydrated. Your joints will thank you.



3 MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT. Carrying around excess weight can strain aching joints. If you are obese or overweight, develop a plan to achieve a healthy weight. If you are already at a healthy weight, keep up your current routine and eat good, nutritious foods. And beware of being underweight! Too skinny simply isn't healthy. Your body needs healthy fats, proteins, vitamins and other nutrients to keep your joints limber and working effectively. Osteoarthritis can be caused by a lack of healthy nutrition and is often seen among anorexic patients.



4 EXERCISE INSIDE. If the weather is extremely cold and makes your joints feel stiff, move the exercise routine inside. Staying active is a great way to get the joints moving and keep them limber, and being sedentary can actually cause an increase in arthritis pain. If it's too uncomfortable to exercise outside, consider joining a gym or walking around an indoor mall.



5 PREVENT FALLS. The last thing you want to do is cause more pain through a fall. Take steps to make sure your house is safe. Ensure you have clear pathways and an uncluttered home so there's less to trip on. Make sure your lamps work and provide adequate lighting throughout your home. If it's icy outside, consider staying inside so you don't take a tumble. Wear supportive shoes with low, comfortable heels.





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