



JULY 2018

ALTERNATIVES

CARE CONNECTION

MANAGING CHRONIC PAIN BEYOND MEDICATION

Chronic pain can be incredibly hard to live with, and pain medications only help so much — sometimes with less-than-pleasant side effects. When medication alone isn't enough, there are other things you can try to ease the burden of living with chronic pain.



- 1. Meditation or deep breathing.** Deep breathing and meditation techniques focus on easing your body into relaxation. This will help reduce tension and tightness in your muscles and can help alleviate some of your chronic pain.
- 2. Reduce your stress.** Negative feelings like depression, anxiety, stress, and anger can increase the body's sensitivity to pain. Learning to better control these negative feelings can help provide some relief from chronic pain.
- 3. Exercise.** Exercising strengthens muscles, which helps to prevent re-injury or exacerbation of current pain. Another benefit of exercise? It releases endorphins, brain chemicals that block pain signals and improve mood. Yoga, for example, can be especially good for people with chronic pain. Before starting any new exercise, be sure to consult your doctor about the best types of physical activity for you.
- 4. Join a support group.** Meeting others who live with chronic pain can help provide you with a sense of community, and you'll benefit from the wisdom of others who are also trying to cope with pain.
- 5. Track your pain levels and activities.** Keep a daily log of your pain, rated on a scale of 1 to 10 for your reference (and for your doctor when you next visit). Also make sure to write down what activities you did that day. This log book will help give your doctor — and you — a better understanding of how you're coping with chronic pain and at what level you're functioning physically.
- 6. Talk to your doctor.** Don't be afraid to reach out to your Primary Care Provider if you're still having trouble dealing with chronic pain. (Be sure to bring your log!) Your doctor knows you best and may be able to recommend other treatments or lifestyle changes that may be able to help improve your coping.

Source: [WebMD](#)



LIFE DOESN'T STOP WHEN YOU'RE SICK.

Why should you wait to get better?

LiveHealth
ONLINE

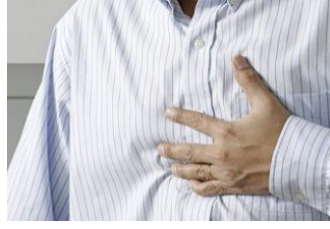
Don't forget: **LiveHealth Online is free for FMCP members and their dependents for calendar year 2018!**

To learn more or to sign up, visit www.livehealthonline.com.

Please note: LiveHealth Online is only available to members who have a PPO plan through the FMCP.

NATURAL REMEDIES FOR HEARTBURN

When you experience heartburn, it may feel like any relief you get is only temporary. You may not want to resort to or rely solely on medication every time you feel your stomach acids bubbling up. There are, however, some natural remedies that can offer some relief for your heartburn.



- 1. Chamomile.** A cup of chamomile tea can have a soothing effect on the digestive tract. (If you have a ragweed allergy, however, you should avoid chamomile.)
- 2. Ginger.** Ginger root is another herbal digestive aid. It has been used for centuries as a remedy for heartburn.
- 3. Licorice.** Licorice is said to increase the mucous coating of the esophageal lining, helping it resist the irritating effects of stomach acid.
- 4. Chewing gum.** This remedy is less about the gum itself and more about the act of chewing it. Gum stimulates the production of saliva, which acts as an acid buffer. Plus, chewing gum makes you swallow more often, which pushes the stomach acids back out of your esophagus.
- 5. Lying on your left side.** When you lie on your right side, your lower esophageal sphincter between the stomach and the esophagus tends to relax, allowing stomach acid to creep back up and aggravate heartburn symptoms. Sleeping on your left side will be more comfortable in avoiding some of those symptoms overnight. Doctors also recommend sleeping on an incline, when possible, so that gravity can keep everything where it belongs.

To help *prevent* heartburn, you should eat slowly and with smaller bites, avoid eating within three hours before bedtime, keep track of trigger foods, avoid wearing tight pants, and try to lose weight.

As always, be sure to talk to your doctor before making any changes to your treatment.

Sources: [Harvard Medical School](#), [WebMD](#), [NY Times](#)

WELLNESS TIP!

It is easy being green!

Eating one green vegetable or one leafy green per day is a great way to get yourself healthier in the kitchen. It can be a cup of broccoli or green beans at dinner, spinach snuck into a smoothie, or leafy kale tossed with chopped sweet potato and some simple seasonings. These foods are chock-full of nutritious benefits. They alkalize our bodies, promote mental wellness, and help protect us from disease.

Sources: [OneGreenPlanet.org](#)



DON'T FORGET

ABOUT OUR MEMBER SELF-SERVICE ONLINE PORTAL!

Our Member Self-Service online portal lets you:

- View your personal data
- Change your address online
- View your claims and EOBs
- Request new medical/Rx ID cards

You can access the Member Self-Service online portal by going to www.nifmcp.com and clicking 'Member Sign in' under the 'Members Only' navigation tab.



YOU DESERVE TO FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT YOUR MEDICAL DECISIONS.

Best Doctors
THE REINVENTION OF RIGHT™

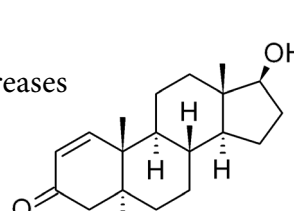
For more information or to sign up for Best Doctors services, contact Best Doctors at **866-904-0910** or visit members.bestdoctors.com.

Please note: If your medical coverage is through Kaiser, this benefit is not applicable.

HOW TO NATURALLY BOOST LOW TESTOSTERONE

Testosterone plays a vital role in bone strength, brain function, and the overall development of lean muscle mass and strength. It also helps contribute to a general sense of well-being and higher energy levels. When your testosterone levels are low, it can leave you feeling less energetic and less self-assured. Low testosterone levels can also cause:

- *Decreases in bone density*, which can lead to osteoporosis
- *Diminishing ability to concentrate*, as well as irritability and depression
- *Increases in body fat*, particularly in the midsection where the buildup increases the risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.



But you don't necessarily need to take testosterone pills or supplements. Sometimes simple lifestyle changes are enough to make up the difference. Here are some ways you can naturally help boost low testosterone:

- 1. Get enough sleep.** A lack of sleep affects a variety of hormones and chemicals in your body, which can impact testosterone. Try to shoot for 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night.
- 2. Keep a healthy weight.** Being overweight, obese, or even underweight can affect testosterone levels, so do your best to get to and maintain a healthy weight.
- 3. Stay active.** Testosterone adapts to your body's needs, so if you don't exercise, your brain gets the message that you don't need as much to strengthen your muscles and bones. When you're physically active, your brain sends out the signal for more testosterone, so make sure you keep moving every day — but don't overdo it either! Extreme amounts of endurance exercise (working out at the levels of professional athletes) can actually lower your testosterone.
- 4. Take control of your stress.** Stress encourages your body to churn out cortisol (the stress hormone) which means it's less able to create testosterone. Try to manage your stress levels.
- 5. Review your medications with your doctor.** Some medications can cause a drop in testosterone levels. If you have concerns, be sure to discuss with your doctor to make sure your medications aren't causing issues or so adjustments can be made if they are.

Source: [WebMD - Low Testosterone](#), [WebMD - Natural Boost](#)

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

PPO - Anthem 1-800-810-BLUE (Provider locator services) www.anthem.com	Rx Drugs - SavRx 1-866-233-4239 www.savrx.com	Best Doctors 1-866-904-0910 https://bestdoctors.com/	Dental - MetLife 1-800-942-0854 www.metlife.com/mybenefits (if applicable)	Vision - VSP 1-800-877-7195 www.vsp.com (if applicable)	NECA/IBEW Family Medical Care Plan 410 Chickamauga Avenue, Suite 301 Rossville, GA 30741 1-877-937-9602 www.nifmcp.com
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