





12 tips for moving your eating habits in the **right direction**.

It's not an easy thing to change your diet. The good thing is, you don't have to give up everything overnight. Just follow these 12 tips to help you get on the right track to eating healthy.



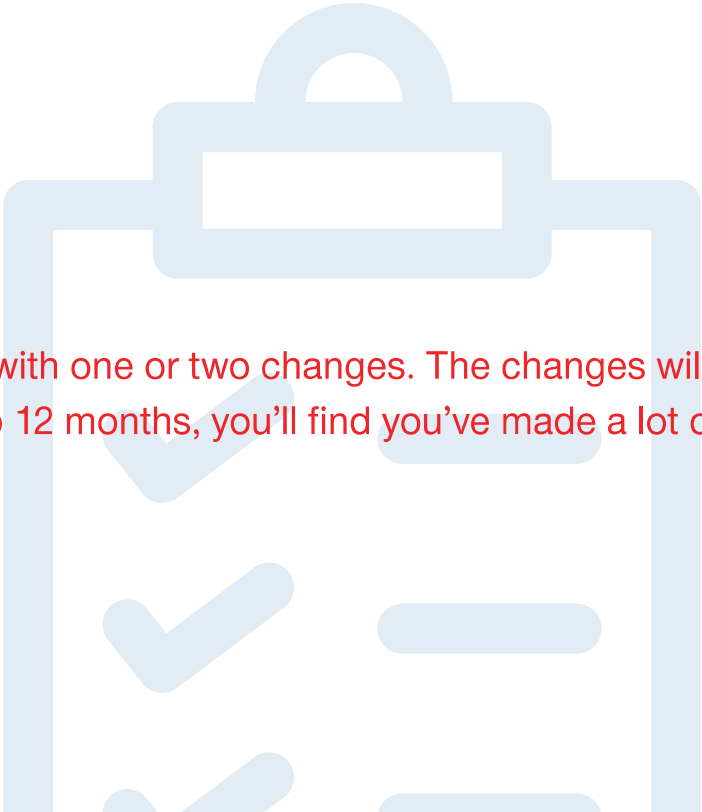
12 helpful tips to healthy eating.

Tip 1:

Look at what you eat now.

Write down what you eat for a few days. Get a good picture of what you are eating every day. This will help you see what changes you need to make.

Write down what you are feeling too. Were you nervous, happy or sad when you ate 5 slices of pizza in one sitting? Writing this down may help you see a pattern. A food diary can help you stay on track. Be honest. If you eat 9 cookies and have to write it down, you may eat only 2 the next time.

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- Start with one or two changes. The changes will become habits in 6 to 12 months, you'll find you've made a lot of changes.

Tip 2:

Start with small changes.

You don't have to give up everything right away. You want to have a lasting healthy lifestyle. Small changes over time are most likely to work. For example:

- If you want to eat more vegetables, try to add one more serving by sneaking it in. Add bits of broccoli to something you already eat, like pizza or soup.
- If you need more whole grains, add barley, whole-wheat pasta or brown rice to your soup.

Think about what you need to add. Other ideas will come to mind. For example, if you have some carrots with lunch or add a banana to your cereal in the morning, you're going to feel full longer. You won't need something that has a lot of sugar or fat an hour later.

Look for ways to make foods you like healthier:

- If you like lunch meat on sandwiches, try eating meats with less fat.
- If you like frozen dinners, look for ones with less sodium.
- If you like fast food, try a salad on the side instead of french fries.

2 to 4 weeks. Then try adding one or two more.





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Tip 3:

Control the amount you eat.

Look at the “serving size” on the food label. Someone may have a large drink and think it’s one serving. But if you look at the label, it’s actually two servings.

If you eat or drink two servings, you have to multiply all the other numbers by two. When the servings go up, so do the calories, fat, sugar and salt.

Here’s what your serving size should look like:

- Meat should look like a deck of cards.
- Pasta or rice should be about the size of a tennis ball.

If there’s more food on your plate, you’re more likely to eat it. An average serving size of meat should look like a deck of cards. Put a smaller amount on your plate or use a smaller plate. Here are ways to make your portions smaller, when you’re at a restaurant:

- Split a meal or dessert with a friend.
- Get a doggie bag to take home half of your meal.
- Make a habit of having only one serving of whatever you eat.
- Ask that your salad dressing, butter and sauces be served on the side. That way you can control how much you use.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 3 oz. (85g)

Tip 4:

Check the nutrition facts on the label.

Compare the nutrition facts on product labels. It'll help you make smart, easy choices. Look at the column that says “% Daily Value” (%DV). A number of 5% or less of the Daily Value is low and 20% or more is high.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 3 oz. (85g)			
Amount Per Serving	As Served		
Calories 38	Calories from Fat 0		
% Daily Value			
Total Fat 0g	0%		
Saturated Fat 0g	0%		
Cholesterol 0g	0%		
Sodium 0g	2%		
Total Carbohydrate 0g	3%		
Dietary Fiber 0g	8%		
Sugars 0g			
Protein 0g			
Vitamin A 270%	• Vitamin C 10%		
Calcium 2%	• Iron 0%		
Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	80g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Look for low numbers for:

- Saturated fat.
- Cholesterol.
- Trans fat.
- Sodium.

Look for high numbers for:

- Fiber.
- Calcium.
- Iron.
- Potassium.
- Vitamin A.
- Vitamin C.

Be sure to look at “**Serving Size.**” It may be more or less than you really eat. It’s there to help you understand:

- Number of calories per serving.
- Amounts of each nutrient, like iron or Vitamin C, in each serving.
- The percentage of “**Daily Value**” in each serving.



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These numbers are for people eating 2,000 calories a day. Some need less than that. It depends on your age, how active you are and if you are a man or a woman.

Use the “**percentage of daily value**” to see whether you should eat more or less. You can compare different foods and see which numbers are higher or lower. Just make sure the serving sizes are about the same.

SOME IMPORTANT TERMS:

- ♥ **FAT-FREE** MEANS THAT FOOD HAS LESS THAN 0.5 GRAMS OF FAT PER SERVING.
- ♥ **LOW-FAT** MEANS THE FOOD HAS 3 GRAMS OR LESS PER SERVING.
- ♥ **LIGHT** MEANS THE FOOD HAS EITHER:
 - ONE-THIRD FEWER CALORIES.
 - OR HALF THE FAT PER SERVING.
- ♥ **REDUCED** MEANS THE FOOD HAS AT LEAST 25% LESS FAT, SODIUM OR CALORIES PER SERVING.





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Tip 5:

Control calories and get the most nutrients.

Healthy foods have more nutrients. Things your body needs, like calcium, potassium, fiber, magnesium and vitamins. It's important to watch how many calories you eat. But you also want to get the most nutrients out of the calories you do eat. Pick foods that are rich in nutrients.

Think of the nutrients you need without using all your calories. It's like a budget at home. You have to pay all the bills first. Then you can use the money that's left for other things. In the same way, you may be able to eat a few foods with too much fat or sugar. Just make sure you are getting the nutrients you need first.

For example, if you eat 2,000 calories a day, you might be able to use 250 calories for something you want that is less healthy.

Tip 6:

Choose foods that are lean, low-fat or fat-free.

Choose lean meats like chicken without the skin. Choose beef or pork with the fat cut off.

Switch from whole milk to 1% or skim milk. Many people don't taste the difference. You can mix whole milk with low-fat milk for a while. Your taste buds can adjust. This doesn't mean you can never have whole milk. Remember, that's where your extra calories come in.

Tip 7:

Know your fats.

Fat provides flavor and makes you feel full. It gives you energy and what you need for healthy skin. It helps your body use vitamins A, D, E and K. But fat also has a lot of calories. When you eat too much fat, you take in more calories than your body needs. That can make you gain weight.

Experts say you should limit your trans fats. But all fats can lead to high cholesterol. And that can increase your chances of heart disease.



Cholesterol.

This is fatty stuff that comes from animals. You can find it in:

- Meat.
- Poultry.
- Eggs.
- Milk and things made from milk.



Saturated fat.

Foods that come from animals have this.

For example:

- Cheese.
- Beef.
- Milk.



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Trans fat.

Sometimes vegetable oils are added to foods to make them taste better and last longer. That creates trans fat. You find it in:

- Vegetable shortenings.
- Some margarines.
- Crackers.
- Cookies.
- Snack foods.

♥ Choose the healthier “good” fat.

Most of the fats in your diet should come from what are called “**polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids.**” These fats do not raise your risk of heart disease. In fact, they make you healthier if you don’t eat too much. They’re found in:

- Fish.
- Nuts.
- Soybeans.
- Corn oil.
- Canola oil.
- Olive oil.
- Other vegetable oils.





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Tip 8:

Focus on fruit.

Experts say you should eat two cups of fruit a day. That amount could be eaten by having:

- One small banana.
- One large orange.
- A quarter of a cup of dried apricots or peaches.

Eat a variety of fruits. Eat more fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit. Drink less fruit juice. The whole fruit has more fiber and fills you up. It is naturally sweet. You do not need to add sugar. Oranges, prunes and bananas are full of potassium.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO EAT EVEN MORE FRUIT:

- ♥ ADD IT TO YOUR CEREAL.
- ♥ MAKE IT INTO A SNACK WITH LOW-FAT YOGURT OR DIP.
- ♥ MAKE A FRUIT DESSERT. MIX LOW-FAT MILK WITH FRESH OR FROZEN FRUITS, LIKE STRAWBERRIES OR PEACHES.
- ♥ PUT FRESH FRUIT OUT ON THE KITCHEN TABLE.
- ♥ BUY LARGE FRUITS, CUT THEM INTO SMALL CHUNKS AND STORE THEM IN THE REFRIGERATOR FOR EASY SNACKING.

Tip 9:

Make half of your grains whole grains.

Whole grains have vitamins, minerals and fiber. Most whole-grain products have the words “whole” or “whole grain” on the package. The “whole grain” must be the first thing listed on the ingredients list on the package. Here are some examples of whole grains:

- Barley and buckwheat.
- Whole wheat, whole oats and whole rye.
- Millet and cracked wheat.
- Oatmeal, popcorn and quinoa.
- Brown rice and wild rice.

You can't tell whole-grain foods by their color. Foods that sound like they contain whole grains may not. Names like brown bread, nine-grain bread, hearty grains bread, or mixed grain bread doesn't mean they are whole-grain foods.

Tip 10:

Eat your veggies.

Food experts say you should eat about two and a half cups of vegetables a day. Try adding vegetables to foods like these:

- Meatloaf.
- Stir-fry dishes.
- Lasagna.
- Omelets.



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While you're cooking, it's easy to chop up and add frozen greens, like spinach. Peas, carrots and corn are easy to add too. Add dark green lettuce to sandwiches. Eat different kinds of green vegetables, like:

- Broccoli.
- Spinach.
- Cabbage.

Eat different kinds of orange and yellow vegetables, like:

- Carrots.
- Winter squash.
- Sweet potatoes.

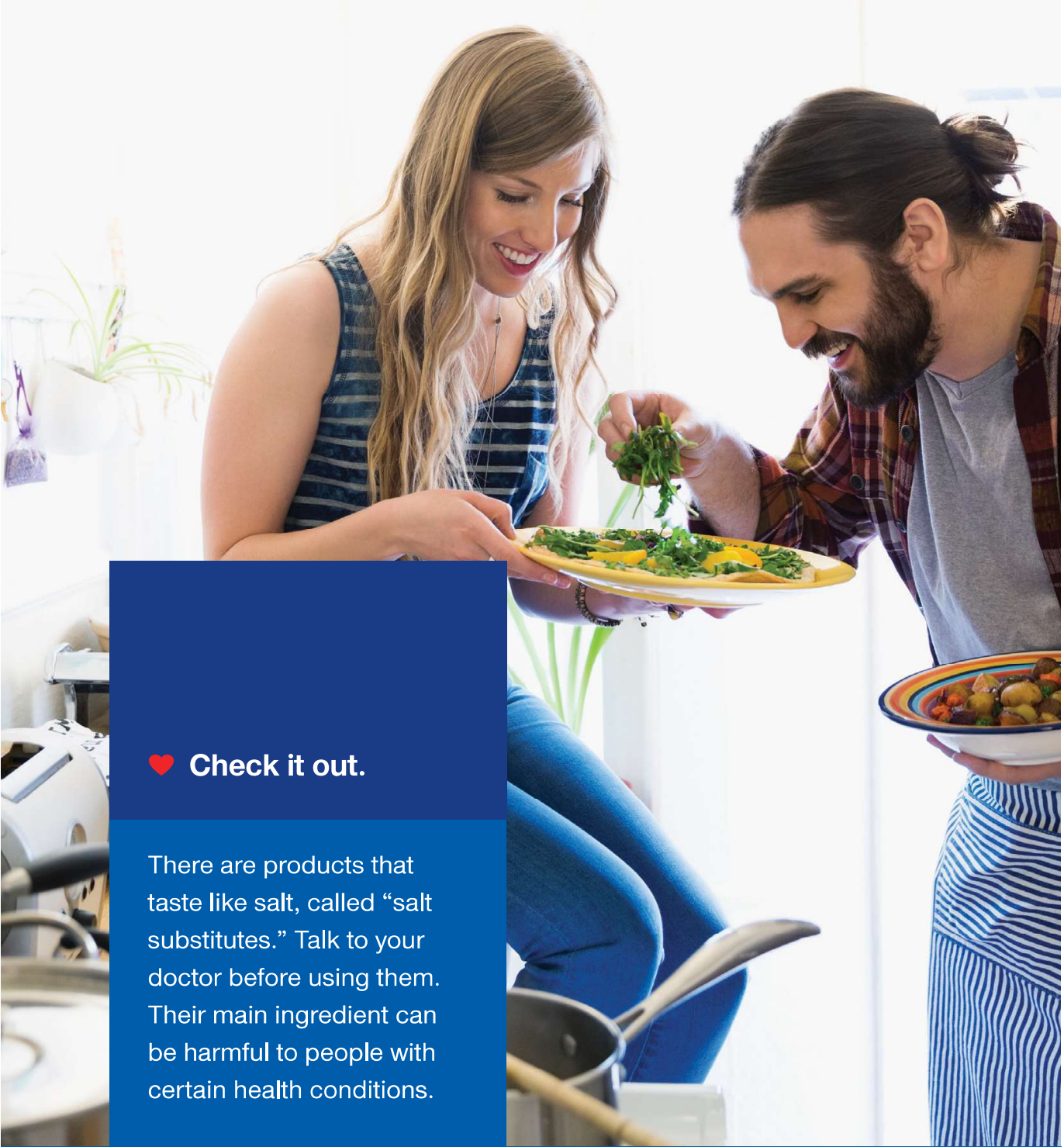
Eat starchy vegetables and legumes, like:

- Corn.
- Pinto beans.
- Dry beans.
- Kidney beans.
- Peas.
- Tofu.
- Chickpeas.

Eat other vegetables, like tomatoes and onions.

♥ Check it out.

Look for ways to make it easy for you to eat your veggies. For example, buy salad in a bag. Or buy whole vegetables at the grocery store, cut them up and put them in the refrigerator. With the vegetables cut up, you can reach in and eat them throughout the week.



♥ Check it out.

There are products that taste like salt, called “salt substitutes.” Talk to your doctor before using them. Their main ingredient can be harmful to people with certain health conditions.



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Tip 11:

Eat less sodium (salt).

Always adding salt to your food could increase your blood pressure. High blood pressure can lead to a stroke, heart disease or kidney disease.

Food experts say people should eat less than 2,300 milligrams of salt a day. That is one teaspoon. People who have high blood pressure, and those who are at risk of getting it, should eat less. They should eat less than 1,500 milligrams of sodium a day.

Most of the sodium we eat does not come from fresh foods. It comes from foods in cans, bottles or boxes. Use the labels to make good choices.

- When it says sodium is 5%DV, it means the salt inside is only 5% of your daily need for salt. That is a low-salt food.
- When it says sodium is 20%DV or more, it means the salt inside is 20% or more of your daily need for salt. That is too high. Choose foods with less sodium. Most people do not notice a difference. Your taste buds adapt. You'll enjoy these foods as much as high-salt foods.

Instead of salt, try flavoring your foods with:

- Herbs.
- Spices.
- Lemon.
- Lime.
- Vinegar.
- Salt-free seasoning blends.

Tip 12:

Limit the amount of added sugars you eat.

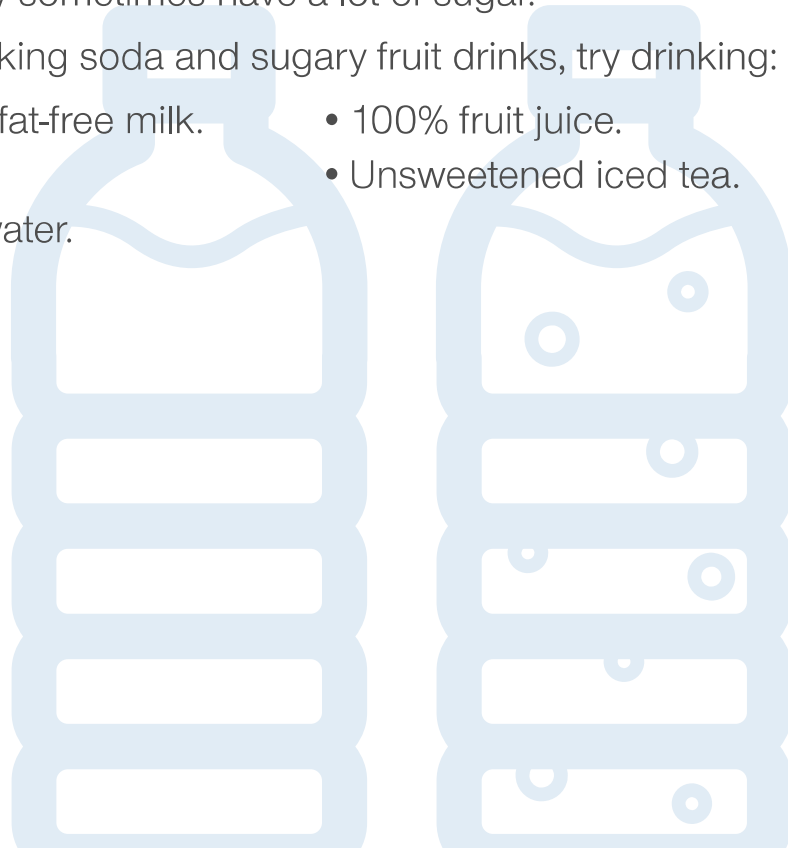
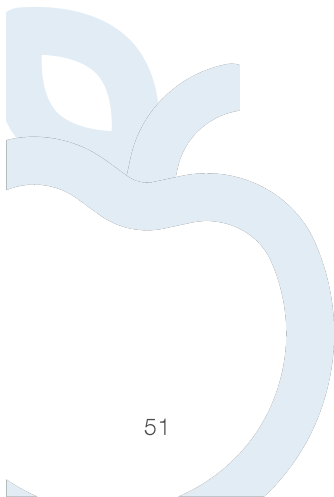
Sugar is added to many foods while they're being made. Food experts say to stay away from foods and drinks with added sugar. One example is foods that have syrups added. These are not natural sugars, like in fruits or milk. Foods with added sugars include: regular soft drinks (soda), candy, cake, cookies, pies and fruit drinks. On their labels, the added sugars may be listed as:

- Brown sugar.
- Molasses.
- Corn syrup.
- Honey.
- Glucose.
- Sucrose.

Be sure to check the type of sugar in low-fat and fat-free products. They sometimes have a lot of sugar.

Instead of drinking soda and sugary fruit drinks, try drinking:

- Low-fat or fat-free milk.
- Water.
- Flavored water.
- 100% fruit juice.
- Unsweetened iced tea.





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Try fruit for snacks and desserts. Fruit is great for satisfying a sweet tooth. That surprises many people. If it's hard for you to resist ice cream, don't keep it in the freezer. Then you have to go out for it. It can be a treat that you eat once in a while.

- HERE ARE SOME SMART SNACKS:**
- ♥ UNSALTED PRETZELS.
 - ♥ APPLESAUCE.
 - ♥ LOW-FAT YOGURT WITH FRUIT.
 - ♥ UNBUTTERED AND UNSALTED POPCORN.
 - ♥ BROCCOLI, CARROTS OR CHERRY TOMATOES DIPPED IN LOW-FAT YOGURT.
 - ♥ GRAPES.
 - ♥ APPLE SLICES WITH PEANUT BUTTER.
 - ♥ RAISINS.
 - ♥ NUTS.
 - ♥ GRAHAM CRACKERS.
 - ♥ GINGERSNAP COOKIES.
 - ♥ LOW-FAT OR REDUCED-FAT STRING CHEESE.
 - ♥ BAKED WHOLE-GRAIN TORTILLA CHIPS WITH SALSA.
 - ♥ WHOLE-GRAIN CEREAL WITH LOW-FAT MILK.

Source: *12 Tips To Start Eating Healthier* By Carol & Richard Eustice, About.com Guide. About.com Health's Disease and Condition content is reviewed by the Medical Review Board.