



NOVEMBER 2012

# HEALTHYROADS<sup>®</sup>

## NEWSLETTER

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### Wellness and Healthy Living

## What Your Doctor Doesn't Know...

Honesty is often the best policy. But when it comes to doctor visits, many patients leave some truths in the waiting room. One survey found that 45 percent have told fibs to their doctors. And 60 percent said they would consider doing it.

Why do so many people tell less than the whole truth to their doctors? Many are scared that they might have a serious health problem. Others are embarrassed to talk about certain issues. Some don't want to admit that they're not taking their medicines. Still others don't tell the truth because they're afraid their doctors will judge or scold them. Politeness can even be a factor. Some patients don't want to sound like they're complaining or take too much of their doctor's time.

If you haven't been honest with your doctor, it's time to come clean. About three-quarters of the doctors surveyed said that they knew that some of their patients weren't truthful about their health. Chances are good that your own doctor is on to you. Plus, it's just not safe to keep information from your doctor. Secrets like these can be dangerous:

- \* **Medicines:** Your doctor needs to know what you're taking and the dose. If you've stopped taking a medicine or lowered the dose yourself, let your doctor know.
- \* **Herbs and alternative treatments:** These can interact with other drugs and procedures. Your doctor may not agree with them, but mention them for safety's sake.

- \* **Family health history:** Talking about family health may be stressful, but your doctor can help you protect your own health if he is aware of your family health history.
- \* **Using alcohol, tobacco, or drugs:** These can all have serious health effects. At the very least, your doctor needs to know your habits to keep you safe when he gives you medicines. He can help you kick habits, too.
- \* **Sensitive issues:** Issues like bodily functions, sex, or mental health can be at the root of health problems. Tackle issues like these by first letting your doctor know that talking about them is hard for you.

Honesty matters when it comes to your health. If you're not honest, it's hard for your doctor to help you manage what ails you. The next time you see your doctor, share what you know about your health. It will help your doctor be a better team player in your health, and the care you receive will be better, too.



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Wellness and Healthy Living  
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 Oh, Those Achy Muscles!

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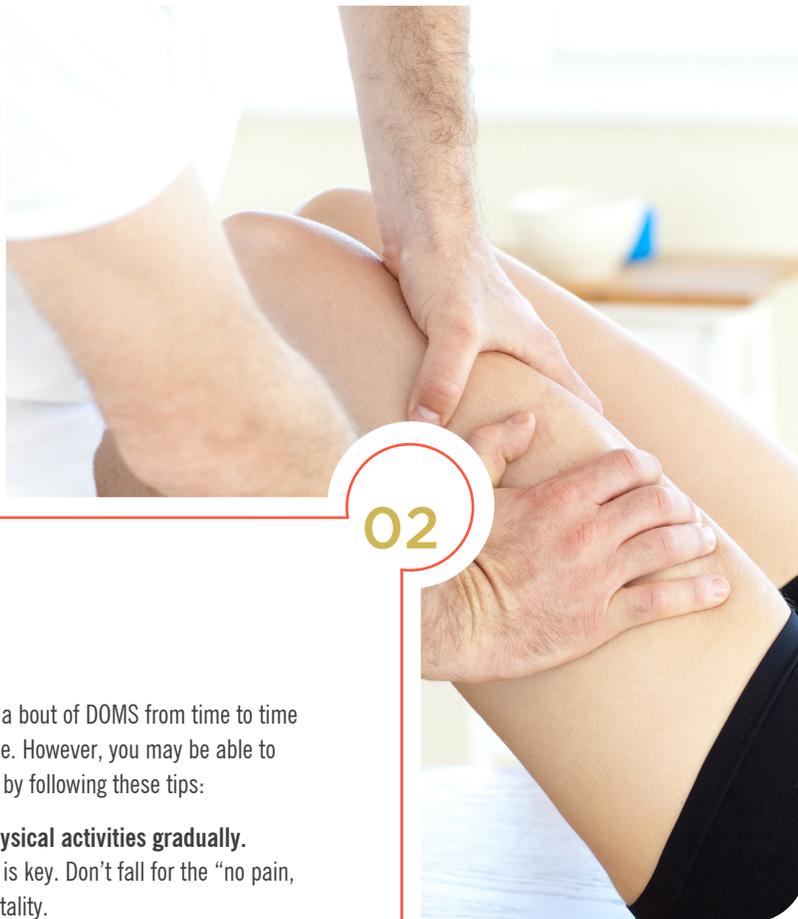
Quitting Smoking  
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Low-Stress Living  
 A Workout for Your Willpower

## IMAGINE...

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02

### Diet and Exercise

## Oh, Those Achy Muscles!

It happens to even the most active people: sore muscles. Maybe you started a new physical activity. Or maybe you kicked an old one into higher gear. You had a great workout, and you feel good afterward. A day or two later, however, is a different story. Your muscles ache.

Muscle pain that arrives 12–48 hours after working out is called delayed-onset muscle soreness (DOMS). You're more likely to have it if you're just starting to become active. But changing your workout routine or returning from a training break can bring it on, too.

The cause of DOMS isn't completely understood. Lactic acid buildup in muscles used to get the blame. Researchers now know that isn't the case. Your body takes care of the lactic acid in about an hour after exercise. Soreness is more likely to be caused by small tears in the muscle and the body's efforts to repair the area with new muscle tissue. Inflammation may also play a role.

On the bright side, DOMS doesn't usually last long. In a few days to a week, your muscles should feel good as new. Continuing light exercise until you feel better can help ease pain. Other treatments that increase blood flow to the muscles can help, too. One good option is massage. On the other hand, applying ice packs can also help. But stretching might not be very effective. Most studies show that stretching doesn't do much to relieve DOMS.

It's hard to avoid a bout of DOMS from time to time when you're active. However, you may be able to prevent or limit it by following these tips:

- \* **Start new physical activities gradually.** Low intensity is key. Don't fall for the "no pain, no gain" mentality.
- \* **Eat protein before and/or after a workout.** Studies show that a protein snack before and after a hard workout may reduce DOMS. The amino acids that are thought to help the most are leucine, isoleucine, and valine. They are found in meat, dairy, eggs, legumes, and nuts.
- \* **Apply ice packs to muscles or dip into a cold bath right after hard exercise.** Applying cold after a workout can slow inflammation and lower your chance of developing soreness.

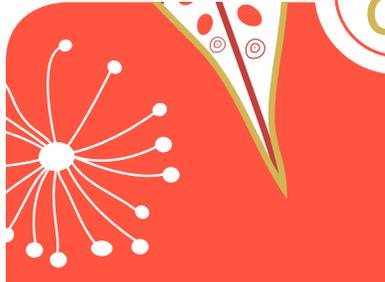
According to the American College of Sports Medicine, though, a little DOMS has a positive effect. It can help protect muscles from getting sore all over again if you do the same activity a couple of days later.

You should also know that muscle pain that shows up during an activity is not DOMS. It's more likely to be a strain or overuse injury. Injuries like these need different treatments. Rest, ice, compression, and elevation are usually advised. You may also need to see a doctor for injuries that show up during a workout or any pain that doesn't ease up in a week.



### COACH TIP:

Be sure to include some protein in your post-workout snack or meal. Studies suggest that protein might help curb those day-after aches. One great option is chocolate milk. It provides the right amounts of protein and carbs to help your muscles recover.



## SERIOUS ABOUT QUITTING?

We at Healthyroads understand the challenges of quitting smoking. That's why we offer a comprehensive Tobacco Cessation program that provides you with the best techniques to help you quit—once and for all. From our phone-based coaching program and educational materials to our online resources and nicotine replacement therapy products (if included in your benefit), we give you every chance to succeed. For anyone considering quitting smoking, take the first step and visit [www.healthyroads.com/optima](http://www.healthyroads.com/optima) or contact us at 877.330.2746.



03

### Quitting Smoking Holiday Triggers

If you've decided to quit smoking, you're already giving yourself a big gift this holiday season. Within hours, your heart rate will slow down and traces of nasty chemicals like carbon monoxide will leave your blood. In the coming weeks and months, your risk of heart attack will go down, and your lungs will work better. This time next year, your risk of heart disease will be half of what it was when you lit up.

With all these benefits, there's clearly no time like the present to quit. It's true that the holiday season may make quitting harder. Knowing where the speed bumps lie and what to do about them can help keep you smoke-free through the holidays and beyond.

- \* **Social events.** Holiday gatherings may trigger your desire to smoke. This is especially true if you enjoy smoking with others.  
**What you can do:** Host a smoke-free event at your home, or meet with friends at a public place where smoking is not allowed.
- \* **Alcohol.** Studies show that drinking alcohol can trigger "high-risk" cravings to smoke. Even the smell of alcohol can be a smoking cue for some people.  
**What you can do:** Choose nonalcoholic drinks. Then, step away from the bar so you're not near the sight and smell of alcohol.
- \* **Holiday blues.** If you start to feel down during the holidays, you may have more than just a case of the holiday blues. Depression can be a symptom of nicotine withdrawal. Anxiety is a symptom, too.

**What you can do:** These feelings should go away in time. Ease stress by breathing deeply, taking a shower or bath, or going for a walk. Ask for help when you need it from family, friends, or your doctor.

- \* **Holiday eating habits.** Most people struggle to eat healthy during the holidays. When you're trying to quit, nicotine withdrawal may make cravings for sweets and other high-calorie foods more intense.

**What you can do:** Keep your blood sugar steady by eating 4–6 small meals a day. Warding off dips in energy can also help curb the urge to smoke. Steer clear of sugary and spicy foods. They can trigger nicotine cravings.

If you give in to a craving and light up, don't despair. Throw away any smokes you've bought and try again. The longer you stick with a quit plan, the easier it becomes. Set goals and reward yourself when you meet them. Before you know it, you'll be celebrating another smoke-free holiday season, and this one will just be a memory.



04

## Low-Stress Living A Workout for Your Willpower

Nothing tests willpower like modern living. Unhealthy convenience food is cheap and hard to avoid. Long hours at work make it easier to hit the couch than the gym. Spending is easy, even when cash is short. No wonder our willpower deserts us.

Willpower is a valuable resource. It can help you stay healthy and reach goals. But using self-control in the face of temptation can be a challenge. Have you ever tried to choose an apple when you'd rather have a doughnut?

Several studies have yielded new ideas about how willpower works. One idea is that willpower is a bit like a muscle. It gets tired if you use it constantly. Some researchers now think willpower is a limited resource. That means it must be built back up after it is spent.

So, if willpower can be drained, what's the secret to meeting a long-term goal? First, define it. Then, stay motivated by monitoring your progress and rewarding yourself when you meet milestones. Along the way, keep your willpower "muscle" strong with tips like these:

**Tackle one goal at a time.** Using a lot of willpower in one area of your life can make it harder to resist temptation in other areas. So quitting smoking and trying to lose extra weight at the same time may be too much.

**Make a temptation plan.** Think about the ways in which you might be tempted. Then, make a plan that helps you meet your goal. For example, if you're avoiding alcohol, plan to ask for seltzer water at social gatherings. You won't tap as much of your willpower reserves if you've planned what to do in advance.

**Exercise often.** One study suggests that sticking to a regular exercise routine leads to better self-control in many other areas of life like eating healthier, drinking less alcohol, and being careful with spending.

**Eat regularly.** Restore your glucose levels with low-fat protein, fruits, and vegetables. Keep meals healthy. If dieting, eat small, healthy meals often, rather than skipping meals. You'll find it easier to make healthy food choices when you aren't really hungry.

**Practice mindfulness.** It's a strong willpower ally. To start, pay attention to your feelings but don't judge them. Then, calm your brain with deep breathing or another type of relaxation.

## GET STARTED

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