

# Healthy workplace

Your monthly Anthem wellness newsletter



## Take Care of your Musculoskeletal Health

Whether working or playing, doing the same thing every day requires good musculoskeletal health. Your musculoskeletal system are the bones and muscles that help you move.

Doing the same motion repetitively can be hard on your body, and can be a strain your musculoskeletal system.

Have you ever felt numbness in your hand or a sharp pain in your arm or wrist? It could be an injury caused by repetitive motion. Repetitive motion injuries (RMIs) usually affect the hands, wrists, elbows and shoulders.

Strain causes tiny tears in your muscles and tendons. When the tears can't heal as fast as they are being made, the area becomes inflamed and painful.

You can prevent RMIs from happening and reduce symptoms with these tips:

- Take frequent breaks. Stretch and give your body time to rest.
- Adjust your chair and desk so you're sitting in a natural position.



- Keep an upright posture. Avoid leaning forward or backward more than you have to.
- Use a splint to lessen pressure on the muscles and nerves.
  - Apply ice on the affected area.
  - To relieve soreness and pain, try physical therapy.

## Do these Sound Familiar?

The most common types of RMIs are tendonitis, bursitis and carpal tunnel syndrome.

- Tendonitis causes pain and swelling where the tendon enters the muscle. Skin over the painful area might be warm and red.
- Bursitis is an inflammation of one of the fluid-filled sacs – bursae – that cushion areas of friction between your tendons and bones. You may have decreased range of motion in the joint that hurts, and it might feel like something is crunching when you move it.
- Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by irritation to the tendons in the wrist. Swelling around the irritated tissue compresses the nerves that run between the wrist and hand, causing pain and numbness in your wrist, arm and hand..

In many cases, RMIs can be prevented with stretching exercises, frequent rest breaks and good posture.

## Back Pain

At some point, most of us will suffer from back pain. It can be caused by something as simple as sleeping in a strange position; or from something more serious, like an accident or injury.

With 63% of Americans now overweight or obese, back pain is on the rise due to the strain of that excess weight on the body.

Back pain is one of the most common reasons people visit a doctor or miss work.



## How to Avoid Problems

Fortunately, there are things you can do to help with back pain:

- Exercise on a regular basis to increase muscle strength and balance. Add total body strength training; a strong core can help prevent injury.
- Use good posture and stay at a healthy body weight.
- Eat a healthy diet with plenty of calcium and vitamin D to strengthen your spine. This also helps prevent osteoporosis (a thinning of bone tissue and loss of bone density over time).
- Be careful when lifting heavy objects. Be sure to support your back by keeping it straight when you do have to lift heavy objects and always lift with your leg muscles.
- Don't smoke. Smoking restricts blood flow to the discs that cushion your vertebrae, lowers calcium absorption and prevents new bone growth.
- Moderation! Don't be a weekend warrior with sports or overdo it with chores around the house.
- Try to lower the stress in your life.

### When is back pain serious?

Most back pain goes away on its own with the right exercise and preventive steps, but some back pain may be a sign of other health problems. Be sure to talk to your doctor if:

- Pain goes down your leg below your knee.
- Your leg, foot, groin or rectal area feels numb.
- You have fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, weakness or sweating.
- You lose control over going to the bathroom.
- Your pain was caused by an injury.
- Your pain is so intense you can't move around.
- Your pain doesn't seem to be getting better after two to three weeks.

# Preventing Tick Bites

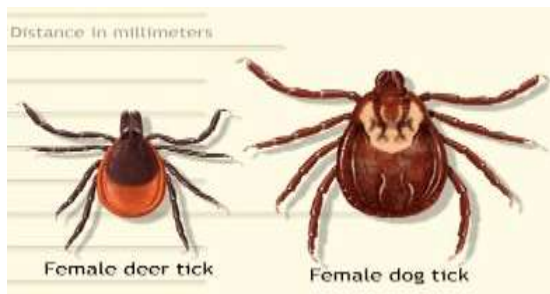
While it's a good idea to take preventive measures against ticks year-round, be extra vigilant in warmer months (April-September) when ticks are most active.

## Avoid Direct Contact with Ticks

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Walk in the center of trails.

## Repel Ticks with DEET or Permethrin

- Use repellents that contain 20-30% DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) on exposed skin and clothing for protection that lasts up to several hours. Always follow product instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes, and mouth.
- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5% permethrin. It remains protective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and may provide longer-lasting protection.



## Find and Remove Ticks from Your Body

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within 2 hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and especially in their hair.
- Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and day packs.
- Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors.
- If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.
- If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium temperature water will not kill ticks effectively. If the clothes cannot be washed in hot water, tumble dry on low heat for 90 minutes or high heat for 60 minutes. The clothes should be warm and completely dry.

Article from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Check out <http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/> for much more information.

## Watermelon Salad

*Instead of offering watermelon wedges at your next cookout, branch out with this sweet and savory watermelon salad featuring cubed watermelon, red onion, kalamata olives, mint, and feta cheese. Even with all the added flavorful ingredients, it still weighs in at only 46 calories per 1/2-cup serving.*



Yield: 12 servings

Serving size: about 1/2 cup salad and about 1 1/2 teaspoons cheese

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup chopped red onion
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice (about 2 limes)
- 4 cups cubed seeded watermelon
- 1/4 cup pitted kalamata olives
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh mint
- 1/2 cup (2 ounces) feta cheese, crumbled

### Preparation

1. Combine onion and juice in a medium bowl; let stand 10 minutes.
2. Add watermelon, olives, parsley, and mint.
3. Cover and chill 1 hour. Sprinkle with cheese.

### Nutritional Information

**Amount per serving:** Calories 46, Calories from fat 47%, Fat 2.4 g, Satfat 0.9 g, Monofat 1.3 g, Polyfat 0.2 g, Protein 1.2 g, Carbohydrate 5.5 g, Fiber 0.5 g, Cholesterol 4 mg, Iron 0.3 mg, Sodium 136 mg, Calcium 34 mg

**Check out more healthy summer recipes at [cookinglight.com](http://cookinglight.com)!**

