



# Better Safe!



WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

## Safe Driving For Distracted Teens Steering In The Right Direction

Learning to drive is a milestone in a young person's life. Driving can bring freedom, especially in areas with little public transportation. But it also has its downside. Mile for mile, teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as more experienced drivers. Crashes are the leading cause of death for 16- to 20-year-olds nationwide. What makes young drivers more vulnerable to accidents and injuries than older drivers? And what can we do to reduce their risk?

### The Risks With Teen Driving

The highest risk for teens comes during the first six months that they have their licenses. Risk remains high until at least their early 20s. Studies show that teens can face a double challenge when getting behind the wheel. They're not only young, and so lack maturity; they're also inexperienced—a main cause of crashes.

Additional risks include:

**Decision-making and impulse control**—continue to develop well into their 20s as they gain experience and their brains mature fully.

**Dialing or texting**—doing so while driving is never safe. But when teens dial or text while driving, they are five to six times more likely to crash than adults.

**Ability to recognize and respond to road hazards**—Adolescents are also less able to recognize and respond to road hazards. For instance, research shows that experienced adult drivers typically prepare to brake on the chance that a pedestrian might enter a crosswalk. Teens may look, but they often fail to recognize a hazard and slow down.

Crashes are the leading cause of death for 16- to 20-year-olds nationwide.

“It can be a situation with a perfectly reasonable, normal kid who makes a mistake when in a vehicle, and that can be lethal,” says Dr. Bruce Simons-Morton, a National Institutes Health expert in adolescent behavior and prevention research. “It only takes one instance of inattention at just the wrong time.”

Learning to drive safely takes years of practice, Simons-Morton adds. “The dilemma is that teens only learn by driving, but the more they drive the greater their risk.”

### Teen Passengers: One Of The Biggest Risks For Driving Teen

When it comes to a teenager behind the wheel, crash risks are nearly double with one passenger and increase even more with each additional passenger. This is true for all teens, even those who are responsible and trustworthy.

Most states do not allow teens to have more than one passenger under the age of 21 (unless the passenger is a member of the driver's immediate family or the driver is traveling to or from school or a school-sanctioned event between 5 am and 10 pm).

To stay on the safe side, it's a good idea to initially limit your teen to no teen passengers, and gradually increase passenger privileges as your teen gains more driving experience.

CONTINUED  
ON NEXT PAGE





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(Continued from previous page)

## Teen Driving: How to Help Keep Your Teen Safe

One solution is to limit the conditions under which teens are allowed to drive. All 50 states have laws that grant privileges to new drivers in phases—known as graduated licensing programs. Most require new drivers to hold a learner's permit for six months before getting a license and have a minimum number of supervised practice driving hours.

Research has shown that these graduated programs can dramatically reduce the rate of fatal crashes. "We encourage parents to set limits that are stricter than the graduated driver licensing programs," says Simons-Morton. It's also important for parents to ride with teens as much as possible when they practice. The presence of an adult passenger can reduce teenage driver crashes and near-crashes by 75%.

Help your teen be a responsible driver. By setting reasonable limits, you can help young drivers travel the roadways safely.

The presence of an adult passenger can reduce teenage driver crashes and near-crashes by 75%.



### SAFE DRIVING FOR TEENS

- Limit driving under risky conditions, such as at night and in bad weather.
- Limit teen passengers, especially ones that engage in risky behaviors.
- Don't tolerate texting or dialing while driving, driving after drug or alcohol use, or riding with a driver who has used drugs or alcohol.
- Make sure new drivers and their passengers always wear seat belts.





## Coping With The Loss Of **A Loved One**

Each year, about 2.5 million people die nationwide. Every death leaves behind an average of four or five grieving survivors. For most, extreme feelings of grief begin to fade within six months after the loss. But some bereaved people may continue to struggle for years to move on with their lives.

### How To Cope

It's often helpful to talk with family and friends about the person who's gone. People sometimes hesitate to mention a dead person's name or discuss the loss, because they don't want to cause pain. But it can help when people share their feelings.

Researchers have tried for decades to identify different stages of grief. They've found that the grieving process differs for every individual. It's affected by how attached you felt to the person who died; whether you were a parent, child or spouse; how the death occurred and other factors.

One study found that acceptance of a death comes surprisingly early for most bereaved people, usually within the first month after the loss. The researchers found that in the two years following a death, the most often-reported symptom is yearning for the person who died. Yearning is much more common than depression, anger and disbelief.

This study and many others have found that if symptoms aren't tapering off by six months after the loss, it may be a sign of a more serious problem, sometimes called complicated grief. People with complicated grief are at risk for major depression, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal thoughts and actions.

Remember, although the death of a loved one can feel overwhelming, most people can make it through the grieving process with the support of family and friends.

### COPING STRATEGIES

- **Take care of yourself.** Try to eat right, exercise and get enough sleep. Avoid bad habits—like smoking or drinking alcohol—that can put your health at risk.
- **Talk to caring friends.** Let others know when you want to talk.
- **Find a grief support group.** It might help to talk with others who are also grieving. Check with hospitals, religious groups, hospices and local government agencies.
- **Don't make major changes right away.** It's smart to wait a while before making big decisions like moving or changing jobs.
- **Talk to your doctor.** If you're having trouble with everyday activities, like getting dressed or fixing meals, see your health care provider.
- **Consider additional support.** Sometimes short-term talk therapy can help.
- **Be patient.** Mourning takes time. It's common to have roller-coaster emotions for a while.

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ON NEXT PAGE**





# Strawberry Banana Yogurt Parfait

## Ingredients

- 4 cups light (no-sugar-added) fat-free vanilla yogurt
- 2 large bananas (about 2 cups), sliced
- 2 cups fresh strawberries, sliced (or used thawed frozen fruit)
- 2 cups graham crackers, crumbled
- ½ cup fat-free whipped topping (optional)

## Directions

1. To make the parfait, spoon 1 tablespoon of yogurt into the bottom of each 8-ounce wine or parfait glass. Top the yogurt with 1 tablespoon sliced bananas, 1 tablespoon sliced strawberries, and ¼ cup graham crackers.
2. Repeat the yogurt, banana, strawberry, and graham cracker layers.
3. Top with a rounded tablespoon of fat-free whipped topping, if desired. Serve the parfait immediately, or cover each glass with plastic wrap and chill for up to 2 hours before serving.

## Yield

8 servings

## Serving Size

1 parfait (1 cup)

## Nutritional Content

Calories	179	Total Fiber	2g
Total Fat	2g	Protein	6g
Saturated Fat	1g	Carbohydrates	36g
Cholesterol	3mg	Potassium	438mg
Sodium	190mg		

Recipe Source: Delicious Heart Healthy Latino Recipes/Platillos latinos sabrosos y saludables



# Arthritis

Many people start to feel pain and stiffness in their joints as they get older, often when they're 45 to 50. It's called arthritis, and it's one of the most common diseases nationwide. You may think it's a disease of old age, but arthritis can affect young adults and even children. In recent years, scientists have made rapid progress in understanding the many causes of arthritis. They've also made significant strides in developing effective new treatments for many forms of the disease.

## What Exactly Is Arthritis?

"Arthr" means joint, and "itis" means inflammation—heat, swelling and redness. But the inflammation of arthritis isn't always something you can see.

Arthritis comes in many forms. In fact, there are more than 100 types, each with its own symptoms and treatments. The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis.

## Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis is a wear or tear disease that breaks down different parts of the joint. It most often affects the fingers, knees and hips.

Osteoarthritis can follow injury to a joint. For example, years after a soccer injury to a knee, you might get osteoarthritis in the knee. Once you've had a severe joint injury, it's important to be careful about what kind of activities you do.

For the most part, researchers don't know a lot about how and why osteoarthritis occurs. Women tend to get it more often than men. You tend to get it as you get older. However, some risk factors are under your control, including your weight—even moderately overweight people have an increase in knee osteoarthritis.

## Gout

Another common type of arthritis is gout. Gout usually affects the big toe, but many other joints may be involved. It's caused by needle-like crystals that build up in the joints. Your doctor might do blood tests and X-rays to find out if you have gout. If you are diagnosed with gout, it can be treated several different ways, often in combination.

## Rheumatoid Arthritis

A very different type of arthritis is called rheumatoid arthritis. In contrast to osteoarthritis and gout, which affect particular joints, rheumatoid arthritis can affect your whole body. It arises when your immune system mistakenly attacks your own joints. That can bring pain, swelling, stiffness and loss of function in joints and bones—most often in the hands and feet. Rheumatoid arthritis may also affect your internal organs and systems. You might feel sick or tired or have a fever. Laboratory tests for certain immune system activity can confirm whether you have rheumatoid arthritis.



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## Arthritis Treatment And Prevention

When it comes to arthritis, you should be active because, ironically, being active can help prevent disease. Of course you want to focus on moderate-intensity exercise (like walking) so that you don't make your joints vulnerable to injury.

Talk to your doctor about exercises that can help and activities you should avoid. Several pain and anti-inflammatory medicines are available by prescription or over the counter. Even better, there are medications not only to control pain and inflammation, but to actually slow or stop damage to your joints.

Perhaps the most promising treatments for osteoarthritis right now involve ways to block pain. Researchers are working on other approaches as well, including exercise routines and devices that alter the alignment of your joints. For severe cases of osteoarthritis, scientists have developed improved surgeries to replace knees and hips.

People with gout might try to avoid certain foods—including liver, beef, anchovies and meat gravy—because they can bring on a gout attack in some people. These foods are rich in molecules called purines, which break down in your body and can ultimately contribute to crystal formation. Drinking alcohol, being overweight and taking certain medications may make gout worse. In older people, some blood pressure medicines can also increase the chance of a gout attack.

The newest rheumatoid arthritis medications interfere with the immune system's activity. By interrupting the events that lead to inflammation, these medications help block inflammation and prevent structural damage to the joints.

If you feel pain and stiffness in your joints, don't hesitate to bring it up with your doctor. If you wait too long, your joints can become damaged beyond repair. Find out what's causing your problems now and learn about your options.



### ARTHRITIS TIPS

Arthritis can damage not only your joints, but also internal organs and skin. Talk to your doctor about what you can do. Here are some ideas:

- Try to keep at a healthy weight that's normal for your height.
- Exercise. A health professional can show you how to move more easily. Going for a walk every day will help, too.
- If you had a severe joint injury, be careful about protecting it during future activities.
- Don't smoke. People who smoke are more likely to get rheumatoid arthritis, and their symptoms tend to be worse.
- Take your medicines when and how you are supposed to. They can help reduce pain and stiffness.
- Try taking a warm shower in the morning.

## What **Surrounds You** Can Put **More Around You**

On the face of it, controlling your weight is simple: eat less and exercise more. But it's much harder than it sounds. Researchers have recently found several factors influencing your weight that you might not be aware of. For one, did you know that your neighborhood and community may affect your weight? A research team has found that access to produce markets, supermarkets and health food stores is associated with lower rates of obesity in New York City.

Here's how to recognize and take control of the things that may be tripping up your efforts at weight control.

**Learn how to read and pay attention to nutrition labels.** Learn how to read nutrition labels and ignore the rest of the packaging. Phrases like "low-fat" don't necessarily mean anything if you're concerned about calories. Some low-fat and non-fat foods actually have more calories than the normal versions. Make sure to look at the number of portions, too. That muffin might seem like it has 150 calories, but if the serving size is  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a muffin, it really has 450 calories.

**Watch those portion sizes.** Did you know that the size and shape of what's holding your food can affect how much you eat? People basically eat what's put in front of them. So try serving food on smaller plates and bowls if you'd like to eat less. If you're eating out, order smaller dishes or plan to share larger ones. Or set aside a portion to take home with you before you even put a bite in your mouth.

**Get enough sleep.** You may not think about sleep when you're concerned with weight, but studies show that people who get less sleep have a higher risk of obesity (along with other health problems). Lack of sleep can disrupt the normal chemical signals in your body and lead you to eat more. So try to get enough sleep. And make sure not to snack mindlessly when you're sleepy, like late at night.

### Calories =

...the amount of energy stored in food. When you eat more calories than your body can use, it stores that extra energy as fat.



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## Your Surroundings And Your Weight

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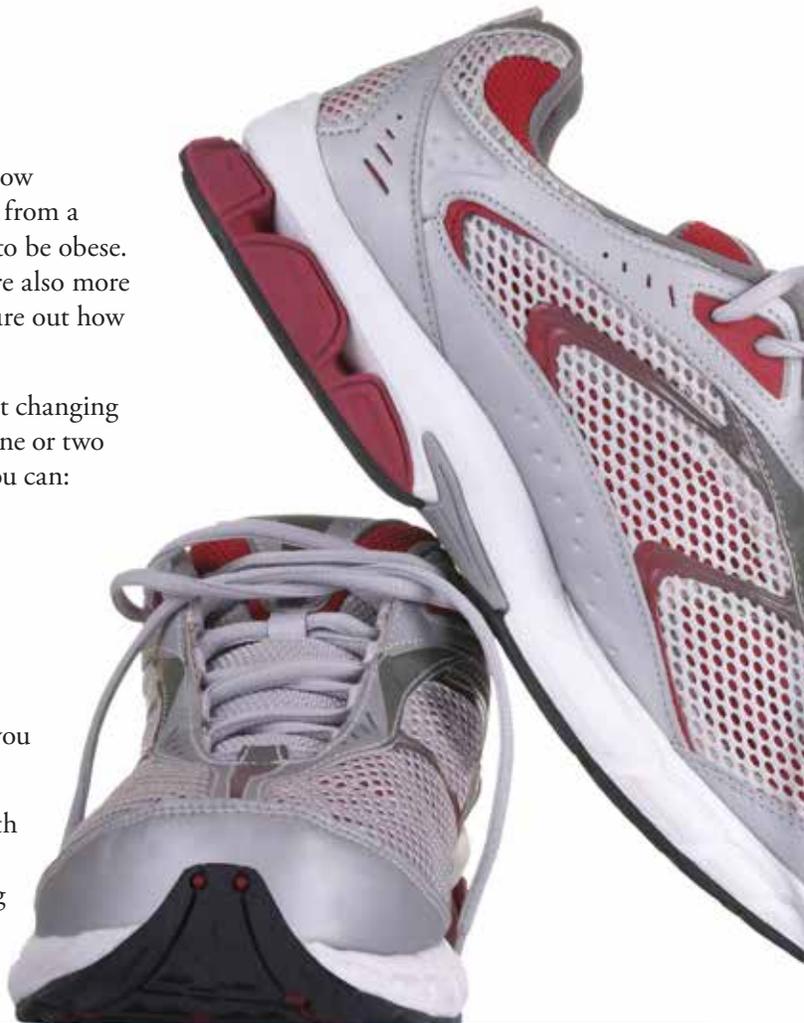
Your surroundings can also affect how active you are. Studies show that people in neighborhoods without sidewalks, or who live far from a recreational facility or a walking or biking trail, are more likely to be obese. People who perceive their community as unpleasant or unsafe are also more likely to be obese. Recognize your particular challenges and figure out how to add exercise and physical activity to your daily routine.

Once you identify the things that affect your weight, you can start changing them. Set modest goals and gradually improve your habits. Pick one or two things in your life that you think you can change. For example you can:

- ✓ Add one extra fruit or vegetable to every meal
- ✓ Walk 15 to 30 minutes a day
- ✓ Cut out one soda every day
- ✓ Stand up and stretch for one minute every hour

You may have to try a few times, but when you meet each goal you can move on to the next one.

Moreover, you may be more likely to lose weight if you work with friends, relatives and co-workers to develop healthier lifestyles. Get the family together to make nutritious meals. Form walking groups with co-workers. Take a dance class with friends.



### WEIGHT CONTROL TIPS

- ✓ **Use nutrition labels.** Don't guess how many calories you're eating.
- ✓ **Watch your portions.** Value-size servings aren't a bargain if you're eating too much.
- ✓ **Cut the sugar.** Don't let sugary soda or other sweets crowd out healthy foods and drinks.
- ✓ **Don't eat out of habit.** Mindless eating at work or in front of the TV can pack on the pounds.
- ✓ **Think about the whole meal,** not just the main course.
- ✓ **Use smaller dishes and containers.** Larger ones encourage you to eat more.
- ✓ **Keep reminders of how much you're eating.** Wrappers, empty containers and bones nearby remind you of how much you've eaten.
- ✓ **Get enough sleep.** Less sleep is linked to higher rates of obesity.
- ✓ **Get active.** Look for opportunities to add physical activity to your daily routine.
- ✓ **Do it together.** Family, friends and coworkers can all help each other make healthy changes to their weight.