

# The Schuylkill Health Letter

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Issue 3

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## Sciatica

### Diagnosis and Treatment



**Buddy A. Touchinsky, D.C.** I've decided to provide a few facts about sciatica and how it can be helped.

Sciatica refers to pain, numbness, or tingling along part or all of the sciatic nerve. The sciatic nerve runs from the buttocks region, down the back of the thigh to the knee then splits and runs along the center and outside portion of the calf region.

First things first, it is necessary to find

out what is causing the sciatic nerve irritation. If it's a lumbar disc herniation with nerve compression and chemical irritation, treatment is going to be very different than irritation due to a piriformis muscle spasm.

Description of your pain and how it started along with a proper physical examination is often enough to determine the cause of the irritation. In some circumstances, X-rays or an MRI may be needed to further evaluate the situation.

For sciatica caused by a lumbar disc issue, spinal decompression by using a specialized chiropractic table or traction machine is often very effective. Performing muscle therapy is also helpful to reduce pressure on the low back, which can often make matters worse. Once the pain

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## What Does Organic Mean?

### And Why Does it Cost More?



#### Health Desk

we did an article explaining just what "organic" means.

According to the USDA website, organic practices "foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity." Does that clear it up? Probably not. It sounds pretty, but it doesn't really say anything.

For a farm to be considered organic, it must do things like rotate crops, enrich

A lot of people have questions about "organic." What is it? Why should I eat organic food? Are they just putting cow manure on my vegetables? So, it's about time

soil naturally with cover crops and crop rotation and find natural methods of pest and disease control. That means no chemical fertilizers, pesticides or sewage sludge (also called biosolids).

Instead, organic farmers use compost to fertilize their crops, mulch to control weed growth and natural predators or traps to control harmful insects. Crop rotation also adds to the health of the soil and helps prevent disease.

So, there are several environmental advantages to organic food production. No chemical pesticides on the plants means no chemical pesticides in your mouth. Also, healthier soil means healthier food. Of course, there is no nutritional difference between organic food and non-organic, right?

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is minimal, a low back strengthening program is used to help prevent the area from being re-injured.

For sciatica caused by tight muscles, massage therapy, stretching and strengthening exercises are used to help correct the situation.

Regardless of the exact cause, other pain relief therapies, like e-stim therapy, can be used to help reduce pain and inflammation along the nerve. In the rare cases where chiropractic care and therapy do not help within a few days, pain relievers and anti-inflammatory medications can help keep the person comfortable during the recovery process.

In even rarer cases (I've had to send patients for these options less than 10 times in the past 5-6 years), a referral can be made to a spine specialist or a pain management specialist for injections or surgery. Spine injections apply a strong anti-inflammatory solution to the area where disc material is irritating or compressing the spinal nerve.

Spine surgery may be required to remove this material when the injections

and all other care options fail. Trigger point or muscle injections can be given to problem muscles that won't relax.

Unlike other types of pain, like simple low back pain for example, leg pain should be evaluated sooner rather than later. Leg pain, even if it follows the description above, can be caused by issues that are not sciatica, like blood clots and infection. Waiting may cause these problems to become much worse.

Even if it is "just sciatica," waiting is still not a good idea. This is a nerve issue, and letting nerve issues persist can cause severe damage. Nerves take a long time to heal, or they never heal at all, like some spinal cord injuries. Allowing the nerve to stay irritated worsens the situation and makes it harder to correct once care is initiated.

For mild cases of sciatica, usually all it takes is a few visits to work out the problem areas and give you exercises and stretches so that you can effectively manage it yourself when it comes back.

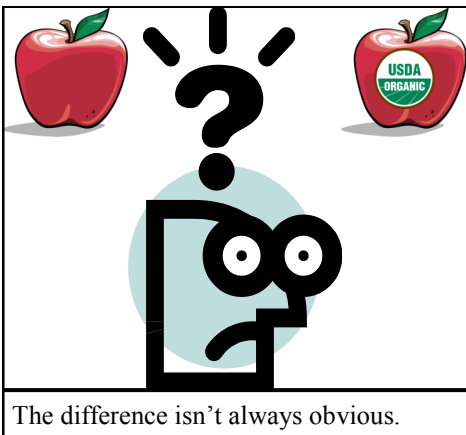
For more severe cases, especially involving disc bulges and herniations, it may take several visits over the course of

a few weeks. The average severe case takes around 4-6 weeks and 12-16 visits to correct. If care is initiated and pain is very severe and not responding within a few treatments, referrals for medical co-management are initiated.

Whether you've only had leg pain for a few days or have been struggling with it for many months or even years, give my office a call to see what I can do for you. I've been helping people from Orwigsburg, Pottsville, Hamburg, and other parts of Schuylkill County and northern Berks County for the past 5-6 years overcome leg pain due to sciatica and other causes.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Touchinsky, call 570-366-2613.

For information on pain relief, pain prevention and healthy eating, subscribe to Dr. Touchinsky's blog at: [www.drtouchinsky.com](http://www.drtouchinsky.com)



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That depends on which foods you're talking about. Organic sugar, while it may not give you as many health problems as white sugar, is still sugar. It's not going to be loaded with all kinds of vitamins and minerals.

Vegetables, on the other hand, show a significant difference between organic and conventional. In the book *Green for Life* by Victoria Boutenko, there is a chart comparing nutrient content in organic and conventional vegetables.

The chart shows that organically grown

spinach has more than twice as much calcium and almost three times as much potassium as its conventional counterpart. In 2002, a study showed that organic oranges had 30% more vitamin C than conventional oranges even though they were only half the size.

While there are many advantages to organically produced food (no sewage sludge), organic products are more expensive than non-organic.

There are a few reasons for the difference in price. Generally, organic practices are more labor-intensive than conventional methods. If a farmer hand weeds his field, it's going to take longer than a chemical spray.

It also costs a lot of money for a farm to become certified by the USDA. Any farm or business wishing to be certified organic has to pay for inspections, testing and applications.

Because of the extra expense involved in becoming certified organic, many smaller farms choose to use organic methods but remain uncertified. In that case, there is no difference between certified organic produce and produce from a farm

that uses all organic methods. Plus, if you buy from a local farmer, it is much easier to ask about his or her growing methods.

Remember, just because something isn't organic doesn't make it bad. In fact some things, such as water and salt, can't be organic anyway. Only cultivated foods can be organic.

So, after all this information, what is most important to remember? Organic farmers produce healthier crops and healthier animals. That means healthier food for you and your family.

# Upcoming Events

**July 5**  
STORE CLOSED



**July 16**  
Master Gardeners  
Patio Ponds  
6:30 p.m.



**July 23**  
Children's Recycled  
Art Day  
10 a.m.-12 p.m.



# Event Info

All events are held in the waiting room at Blue Mountain Family Chiropractic. Admission is free, and seating is limited.

If you are interested in attending an event, call us at:

**570-366-2620**



**NATURAL MARKET**  
Route 61, Orwigsburg  
570-366-2620

## Store Hours

Mon-Fri ..... 9 a.m.-7 p.m.  
Sat..... 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

- Organic Food
- Local Produce
- Local Meat and Dairy
- Gluten Free Foods
- Personal Care Products
- Baby Products

[www.healthyhabitsnaturalmarket.com](http://www.healthyhabitsnaturalmarket.com)



## Quick ~ Healthy ~ Delicious



### Grilled Veggie Pizza

- 1/2 zucchini sliced thin
- 2 tsp thyme
- 1/3 C balsamic vinegar
- 1 clove diced garlic
- 1/2 red bell pepper, cut in strips
- salt and pepper (optional)
- 2/3 C olive oil
- 1 C cherry tomatoes cut in halves
- 8 oz shredded mozzarella
- 1/4 C fresh basil
- 10oz readymade pizza crust

- Combine the thyme, garlic, oil, salt, vinegar, pepper and basil to make the marinade, and then marinate the vegetables for half an hour.
- Preheat the grill to medium and coat the grill rack with cooking spray. Grill the pizza crust until it is golden brown and puffed up. Turn the crust over and brush a teaspoon of oil on it.
- Take the vegetables out of the marinade, draining them well, and grill for 4 minutes.
- Scatter the mozzarella over the crust and arrange the veggies on top of it. Grill for 10 minutes or until the pizza is done.
- (Serves 4)

Healthy Habits Natural Market is a locally owned, independent health food and products store located in Orwigsburg, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. We are located near Pottsville, Reading, Tamaqua, Pine Grove, and Hamburg. We carry local organically grown produce, meats, dairy, and eggs. We also carry many natural and organic products, including pet foods and treats.

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Healthy Habits Natural Market  
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Orwigsburg, PA 17961

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