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LIVE WELL, BE WELL

GHT
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March 2015

top health

Boost Your Mood With Exercise

Have you ever tried exercise to relieve stress or a bad mood? Chances are you felt better afterward. Scientific research has demonstrated that the link between exercise and mental health is strong, though not fully understood. Research shows exercise provides short- and long-term psychological improvements, including:

1. **Reversing stress –** Exercise can provide an immediate distraction from stressful worries and frustration. It helps you cope by producing a sense of calm as it relieves muscle tension and boosts energy. It's important to choose exercise options you enjoy.
2. **Building self-esteem –** Achieving fitness goals, even small ones, can build confidence, restore positive feelings and give you a sense of control, as well as improve your body image.
3. **Lifting depression –** Working the muscles releases mood enhancers in the brain, and may reduce chemicals that worsen depression. Alleviating a depressed mood and anxiety generally takes a longer course of exercise. The best results may occur with moderately intense aerobic workouts lasting 30 to 40 minutes most days of the week. They may significantly cut symptoms of moderate depression. Weight training might also be effective.

Is staying fit mentally the best incentive for staying active? It offers an immediate reward: Mood-boosting benefits can happen within minutes, while the physical effects of regular exercise, such as weight loss and increased muscle mass, can take weeks.

take charge

Baby Boomers:

Staying Well into Old Age

If you're a baby boomer, you know lifestyle affects how healthy you are today and how well you may age.

How we live can help us avoid premature disease and disability often linked to aging. Yes, it takes good genes and good medicine – but the rest is up to you. ➡ Continued on page 4.

best bits

■ **Diabetes Alert Day on March 24 calls on everyone to learn their risk factors for type 2 diabetes** and take steps toward a healthier lifestyle. In the U.S., nearly 26 million children and adults have type 2, and a quarter of those don't know it. To take a Diabetes Risk Test and learn more about the disease, visit www.diabetes.org.

■ **During Patient Safety Awareness Week (March 8 to 14),** international health care organizations promote awareness and prevention of diagnostic errors. Experts estimate 1 in every 10 diagnoses is wrong, delayed or neglected altogether; these errors may account for some 40,000 to 80,000 deaths in the U.S. To learn more, visit the National Patient Safety Foundation at www.npsf.org.

■ **Poison Prevention Week is March 15 to 21 – time for some reminders:** Store medicines and toxic household substances in original, labeled, child-resistant containers and out of children's reach. Keep emergency numbers for your provider, the nearest poison control center (1-800-222-1222) and hospital handy. About 1 million children are poisoned each year from ingested medicines or household toxins. Learn more at www.poisonprevention.org.

"Good health is not something we can buy. However, it can be an extremely valuable savings account." – Anne Wilson Schaef

This Edition

➡ QuikQuiz™: Drug Disposal
➡ 5 Food Habits You Can Fix
➡ Tablet Ergonomics
➡ Recipe: Turkey Mushroom Loaf

QuikQuiz™: Drug Disposal

If you're like most people, you probably have a collection of half-used or expired medications in your medicine cabinet – prescription and over the counter. Test your knowledge of safe drug disposal.

1. Some communities in the U.S. will take unused or expired medicines for disposal.
   True__ False__
2. The FDA says most medicines can be thrown into your trash with precautionary steps.
   True__ False__
3. Chemicals and toxins from drugs tossed down the sink or toilet can leak into groundwater, potentially polluting the environment and posing health hazards.
   True__ False__

ANSWERS

1. *True.* Community-based **drug take-back programs** offer the best option for disposal. Ask your pharmacist about programs in your area.

2. *True.* If there isn't a drug take-back program in your area, you can remove drugs from their original containers and mix them with an undesirable substance such as coffee grounds or cat litter. Then place the mixture in a sealable, unbreakable container (that prevents leaking) in your trash.

Important: By taking safeguards with old medicines before tossing them, you may prevent children or animals from consuming them. Note: Some medicines have specific disposal instructions. When in doubt about proper disposal, ask your pharmacist or health care provider.

3. *True.* However, the FDA says the main way drug residues enter our water systems is by people taking medicines and then naturally eliminating them; many drugs are not completely absorbed or metabolized by the body.

Tip: Before tossing out prescription medicine containers, scratch out all identifying information to protect your privacy.

Reversing the Obesity Epidemic

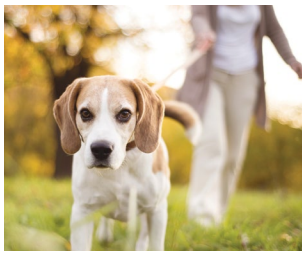
The surge in obesity began 30 years ago and has been accelerating more rapidly in recent years.

Are you facing obesity? If so, the smartest thing you can do to keep weight gain from becoming a serious problem is to meet with your health care provider. Ask for guidance with weight loss based on your health history. Discuss any obstacles to adopting the lifestyle behaviors listed here.

6 ingredients for healthy behaviors everyone can use:

1. Choose nutritious foods: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, unsaturated fats and protein sources such as fish and lean poultry.
2. Limit less-nutritious foods: refined grains, sweets, processed foods and sugary drinks.
3. Increase physical activity.
4. Limit television time, screen time and other sit-down time.
5. Improve sleep.
6. Reduce stress.

Trying to take all of these steps at once may seem overwhelming. Instead, add 1 step a month into your daily routine. ***Small steps lead to big health rewards.***



Thyroid Trouble?

The thyroid produces hormones that control your body's metabolism – the way every cell in your body uses energy.

When the thyroid doesn't produce enough hormones, the condition is called **hypothyroidism** or **underactive thyroid**.

The symptoms of underactive thyroid include: unusual fatigue and weakness, weight gain, hoarseness, trouble swallowing, dry skin, hair loss and cold intolerance. Hypothyroidism seldom causes symptoms in the early stages. But over time, if left untreated, it can cause a number of health problems, such as obesity, joint pain, abnormal cholesterol and heart disease.

Causes? Hypothyroidism may be due to a number of factors, including autoimmune disorder, radiation therapy and use of lithium.

When to test for thyroid trouble: If you have persistent symptoms, talk to your health care provider. Fortunately, thyroid disorders usually respond well to treatment.

Start the Day Right

How you start your morning can set the tone for your entire day. Greet the day right with these strategies.

>**Go to bed earlier.** A good night's sleep will start your day strong.

>**Avoid the snooze button.** Get up on time so you won't feel rushed and stressed. If you like time to linger in bed, set your alarm for 20 minutes earlier.

>**Reflect.** Spend a few minutes reflecting quietly, read or listen to music, or do some stretching.

>**Exercise.** It quickly raises your energy level and clears your head. Plus, getting your exercise in first thing means you won't put it off later.

>**Nourish yourself.** Avoid sugary breakfast foods full of empty calories. Eat a nourishing morning meal that includes some protein and whole grains for sustained energy and blood sugar levels.

>**Turn off media.** Consider skipping the morning newscast or browsing the headlines, especially if they make you feel worried or stressed. Instead, focus on peaceful, positive ways to prepare for the day ahead.

best bites

Tip of the Month:

The Lighter Side of Fast Food

Two steps to healthful fast food:
AVOID deep-fried foods, milkshakes, super-sized burgers, sugary beverages, full-fat dressings, mayonnaise, tartar sauce, butter and sour cream.
CHOOSE grilled chicken or fish, lightly dressed salads, fruit, yogurt, salsa and sandwiches on whole-grain bread. And make fast food an occasional treat.

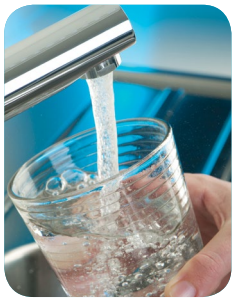
eating smart

5 Food Habits You Can Fix

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

March is Nutrition Month.

There's an old saying that goes, *If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got.* If any of the negative food habits below describe your lifestyle, it's time to switch to another adage, *Change what you do and it can enrich you!* Here are some common eating habits and how you can change them:



- **If you drink lots of soft drinks:** Cut back and choose water or sparkling water flavored with mint, citrus or cinnamon. Excess sugar in regular soft drinks may increase chronic disease risk and contribute to weight gain.
- **If you confuse snacks with treats:** Snacking between meals is beneficial if you choose nutritious options such as fruit, nuts, Greek yogurt or vegetables with hummus, which help sustain energy levels and stabilize blood sugar. Treats such as candy bars, chips or cookies are not nutritious snacks.

- **If you rely heavily on processed foods:** Start by planning easy recipes that call for favorite fresh, whole foods, so these items are at the ready in your kitchen. Take a grocery store tour with a dietitian (free at some supermarkets), and learn how to prepare quick dishes without processed ingredients.
- **If you dine out nightly:** Invest some time and energy in cooking. Start once a week with a simple recipe; then add more ideas to your collection. You'll soon find that cooking can be easy and fun, is much less expensive than dining out, and helps you control your weight.
- **If you skip breakfast:** Don't. An early meal can help you stay alert and energized for several hours. Start the day with a protein- and fiber-rich small meal, such as oatmeal with yogurt or scrambled eggs and whole-grain toast.

Turkey Mushroom Loaf

EASY | RECIPE
From Personal Best®

- ½ cup **whole-grain oats**
- ½ cup **onion**, chopped
- 2 pounds ground **turkey**
- 2 **eggs**, beaten
- 1 cup fresh **mushrooms**, minced
- ½ tsp **salt**
- ¼ tsp **pepper**
- ¼ tsp **paprika**

1. Preheat the oven to 375˚F.
2. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Transfer mixture to 9x13-in. baking dish and shape into a loaf about 5 in. wide and 3 in. high.
3. Bake about 50-60 minutes or until instant-read thermometer registers 165˚F.
4. Remove from oven; rest for 10 to 15 minutes before slicing.

Serving idea: Turn loaf into burgers with whole-grain buns, sliced tomato and avocado.

Makes 9 slices. Per slice:
186 calories | 21.8g protein | 9g total fat | 2.4g saturated fat | 3.2g mono fat | 3.5g poly fat | 111mg cholesterol | 4.2g carbohydrate | .5g sugar | .6g fiber | 202mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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Tablet **Ergonomics**

Since reading, working and keeping in touch socially are now often done on tablets, users need to re-examine the way they hold and read tablets so they don't incur injury or strain. A Harvard School of Public Health study revealed tablet users put a considerable amount of strain on their necks compared to desktop or laptop users. What can you do to prevent neck strain and pain?

- **Position your tablet at or just below eye level,** which may mean that you place the tablet higher than table or desk level. This prevents constantly bending your neck to look down, which causes undue neck strain.
- **Move around.** Take advantage of a tablet's portability and take frequent breaks or change positions so you are not sitting in 1 position for long periods.
- **Use a separate keyboard** if you plan on using your tablet like a desktop.
- **Keep a neutral position when reading your tablet** – shoulders relaxed and neck straight.

These few pointers should help you avoid unnecessary pain and strain.

top safety

Baby Boomers: ➡ Continued from page 1.

4 Factors for Healthy Aging

Weight – If you're overweight, begin losing excess pounds now to protect your joints from arthritis and your heart from elevated blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels. ***Goal:*** Lose 1 to 2 pounds per week through reduced calories and added physical activity.

Exercise – It's as close to a magic bullet as you'll find for staying well. Put regular exercise on your daily to-do list. ***Goal:*** Get 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (e.g., brisk walking) at least 5 days a week; stretch daily; and strength train 2 to 3 times weekly.

Sleep – Ongoing sleep deprivation may contribute to numerous health problems, including type 2 diabetes, depression and metabolic changes – including abnormal cholesterol and high blood pressure – which are linked to obesity. Regular exercise improves sleep quality. ***Goal:*** Follow the exercise plan at left.

Preventive care – Routine preventive services, such as diabetes and cancer screenings, can be lifesavers. ***Goal:*** Work with your provider to reduce your health risks, such as smoking and stress.

Thanks to ongoing research and education in the value of a healthy lifestyle and prevention, we have the ability to age in better health than ever before.

expert advice

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Q: What is spinal fusion?

A: Spinal fusion is a surgery that connects the bones in your spine. During the procedure the surgeon places a bone graft between 2 or more spinal vertebrae. Metal plates and screws hold the vertebrae together while the bone graft heals. After healing, the fused area of spine becomes 1 solid unit that no longer bends.

The decrease in spine movement can improve stability, correct deformity and alleviate pain for several conditions. Spinal fusion is used to treat slipped or broken vertebrae or herniated discs (the pads between vertebrae). The procedure is sometimes recommended for abnormal curvature of the spine, bone instability from arthritis or chronic low-back pain.

Get a second opinion before undergoing spinal fusion. Ask about your surgeon's success rate for your condition and the number of procedures performed. Also learn about potential complications, your nonsurgical options and health care coverage.