

# HealthConnection

GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY

Issue 4 • Allergies



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## Your Diet

### How Much is Too Much?

One of the biggest risk factors for type 2 diabetes is being overweight, and a diet high in calories from any source contributes to weight gain. However, research has shown that drinking sugary drinks is linked to type 2 diabetes, and the American Diabetes Association recommends that people limit their intake of sugar-sweetened beverages to help prevent diabetes.

In the past, people with diabetes were told to completely avoid sugar. Experts thought that eating sugar would heavily raise blood-glucose levels. Research has now shown that while the type of carbohydrate can affect how quickly blood-glucose levels rise, the total amount of carbohydrate you eat affects overall blood-glucose levels more than the type. Now experts agree that you can substitute small amounts of sugar for other carbohydrate-containing foods into your meal plan and still keep your blood-glucose levels on track. If you're on rapid-acting insulin taken before meals, you may need to adjust your dose for meals or snacks containing more simple sugars.

That doesn't mean you can eat all the sugar you want. Most sweets contain a large amount of carbohydrate in a very small serving, so be sure to have a small serving. Talk with your doctor about the appropriate amount of sweets for your diet.

—Source: American Diabetes Association



## What's Happening at the Pharmacy?

### What is a Pharmacy Technician?

When you visit your local *Good Neighbor Pharmacy*, you may be helped by a pharmacy technician. Under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist, pharmacy technicians may help assemble medications for prescriptions, provide information to patients, field customer phone calls and perform other administrative duties. Many pharmacy technicians complete a certification program (CPT) to ensure competency in their knowledge of the pharmacy and the law.

Pharmacy technicians accept and double-check prescriptions, maintain patient records in a computerized system, stock pharmacy shelves with incoming prescription medications, and check prescription-drug insurance coverage for patients. They maintain proper storage and security conditions for medications, type and affix labels and maintain patient profiles.

The next time you stop by your *Good Neighbor Pharmacy*, say hello to your friendly pharmacy technician! He or she is there to help make your experience at the pharmacy counter a good one, whether you are picking up a prescription, ordering a refill or simply asking a question.





## It's That Old Sneezing Season Again (And Pollen Maybe on the Rise, Scientists Say)

If you are one of the 16.9 million people in the U.S. that has been diagnosed with seasonal allergies, the news may not be good. Allergic rhinitis, commonly known as seasonal allergy or “hay fever,” is typically caused by outdoor allergens, usually pollen. People with hay fever have symptoms that can include runny nose, sneezing, congestion and sinus pressure. Symptoms can occur at different times of the year depending on the type of pollen:

- Spring: tree pollen
- Late spring and summer: grass pollen
- Fall: ragweed

In addition to pollen, spores from fungi and molds can cause symptoms during warm-weather months.

So what is the bad news? Scientists have noted changes in all pollens. For example, the amount of pollen from ragweed is increasing, the ragweed season is getting longer and the potency of the pollen is getting stronger. Some data suggests that increases in average temperature and amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere may contribute to changes in pollen.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture monitors the temperatures in the U.S. and notes how well different plants grow in different areas. Gardeners know this as plant-hardiness zones. Hardiness zones are determined based on the average annual minimum winter temperature.

The USDA has determined that in some areas plant hardiness is shifting northward. Later frosts and warmer temperatures make the growing season longer for ragweed. With a longer season, there are more plants producing more pollen. Compounding the problem of increased amounts of pollen, scientists have also determined that increased carbon dioxide in the air means there is more of a specific protein, Amb a 1, in the ragweed pollen, making each grain more potent. All of this adds up to more allergic responses for people with hay fever, even those who have had mild allergies in the past.

What should you do if you suffer from hay fever? The good news is that many people can manage their seasonal allergies with over-the-counter (OTC) antihistamines. When OTC medications are not enough, an allergist can advise on the cause of the allergy, and provide prescription medications and avoidance measures to control the symptoms. The only way to significantly reduce your response to seasonal allergens is through allergy shots.

This spring, if the sneezing starts, you may be feeling the effects of the increasing amount of pollen. Your best course of action may be to consult an allergist.

—Sources: University of North Carolina School of Medicine

## Healthy Eating Grow Your Own Salad

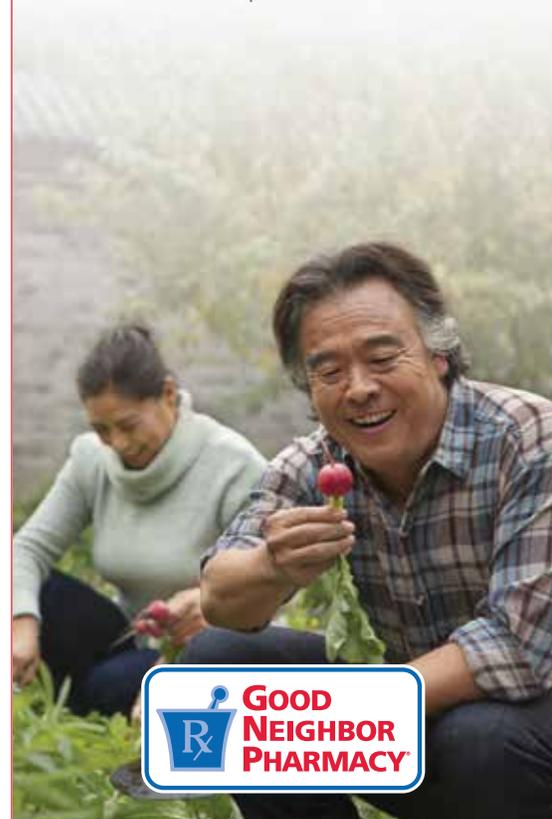
Growing your own salad greens is easy and inexpensive. They should be planted in the early spring after the last frost (right now is perfect) to be harvested by June. You will need:

- A variety of salad-green seeds
- A fairly large growing area

Getting started:

- Till the soil thoroughly, breaking up clumps and removing stones and debris.
- Mix in plenty of compost and well-cured manure to ensure the best growing soil for selected salad-green variety.
- Plant seeds about two feet apart, depending on variety.
- Keep soil moist, but avoid watering in the evening.
- Mulch soil to conserve moisture and keep soil cool.
- Once plants have grown, feed every three weeks with seaweed extract or compost tea (easily found in a nursery).
- Begin cutting lettuce leaves as soon as they're large enough for use in a salad. Harvest when lettuce heads are firm and fully formed.

—Source: California Department of Public Health





## Health Q&A

### What Can I Do to Stop Athlete's Foot?

**Q:** I have athlete's foot and the inflammation and itching are bothersome. What can I do to treat it — and to keep it from coming back?

**A:** Athlete's foot is a skin infection caused by a fungus, usually occurring between the toes or on the soles of the feet. It is encouraged by a warm, damp environment inside the shoe. The warmth and dampness of the areas around locker rooms and swimming pools can encourage the spread of athlete's foot. (Not all foot rashes and irritations are athlete's foot. So you'll want to get a diagnosis confirmed by your doctor.) Signs of athlete's foot include dry skin, itching, scaling, inflammation and blisters.

Good foot hygiene is the best defense. Wash your feet daily with soap and water; dry them carefully, especially between the toes; and change your shoes and socks regularly to decrease moisture. Using a good-quality foot powder can be helpful. If you shower or change in a public locker room, bring your own sandals and avoid going barefoot.

There are a number of effective medications to help treat and control this fungal infection. Your doctor can recommend the best over-the-counter medication for you or will prescribe prescription medication if needed. Different types of anti-fungal medications can be applied topically or taken by mouth. If the infection is caused by bacteria, an antibiotic may be prescribed.

—Source: American Podiatric Medical Association

## Get Fit

### 10,000 Steps Per Day: You Can Do It!

Pedometer walking and 10,000-steps programs are popular, but many people don't know exactly how to begin. Here are answers to common questions about the 10,000-steps phenomenon.

Actually, 10,000 steps is not as much as it seems. Even very sedentary people usually walk 5,000 to 6,000 steps per day. So you only need to walk an extra 4,000 to 5,000 steps. Most people take 2,000 steps per mile, so if you are very inactive, you will need to walk about two to 2.5 miles per day. Walking at a moderate pace takes about 30 to 40 minutes. Interestingly, this is about the same as the public health guidelines to accumulate 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity.

Do you have to take all these steps at the same time? Absolutely not. You can accumulate your steps throughout the day. That's what so great about 10,000-steps programs: all your steps count. Every time you decide to walk to a co-worker's office instead of emailing, take the stairs instead of the elevator, park a little further away, you increase your daily step total.

Other suggestions:

- Park farther away at the grocery store, mall or work.
- Push-mow your grass instead of using a riding lawn mower.
- Use your lunch break as an opportunity to get out and walk.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Instead of calling a neighbor, walk over and see him or her.
- Take a 30-minute walk after dinner.

Think of 10,000 daily steps as your long-term goal. It is better to add steps gradually so that you can find ways to fit the extra activity into your daily routine. Many researchers now agree that just adding 2,000 steps more into your daily routine can help you lose weight. As long as you keep improving, you will inevitably become healthier.

—Source: University of Illinois





*Senior Health Update*

## Help Prevent Slips and Falls

About half of all falls happen at home. To make your home safer:

- Remove things you can trip over (like papers, books, clothes, and shoes) from stairs and places where you walk.
- Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape or secure rug pads to keep the rugs from slipping.
- Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily without using a step stool.
- Have grab bars put in next to your toilet and in the tub or shower.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.

- Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, you need brighter lights to see well. Hang light-weight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
- Have handrails and lights put in on all staircases.

—Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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For more information, visit [www.GoodNeighborPharmacy.com](http://www.GoodNeighborPharmacy.com).

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*Kids' Corner*

## Are You Getting the ZZZs You Need?

Getting a good night's sleep is important for kids. (It's important for grown-ups, too!) Because you're growing so fast when you are young, sleep is especially important for you. Without getting enough ZZZs every night, it can be tough for you to stay awake, pay attention in school and have fun with your family and friends.

Getting enough sleep will help you remember what you learned all day, help you have more energy for sports and playing, help your body fight illnesses better and help you feel better about yourself!

If you are five to 12 years old, you should aim for getting 10 to 11 hours of sleep every night. Go to bed at the same time every night. Follow a bedtime routine every night before bed — like reading or listening to quiet music. Exercise during the day for better sleep. Have a light snack or a warm glass of milk before bed if you are hungry. And ask a parent to help you keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet.

What shouldn't you do? Don't watch TV or play video games close to bedtime, as both can disturb your sleep. Don't exercise too close to bedtime (about three hours or sooner). And don't drink soda or eat chocolate in the evening because they contain caffeine, which can make it harder to sleep. Ask family members to not watch TV, play video games, make loud noises or turn on bright lights in your bedroom while you are trying to sleep.

Happy snoozing!

—Source: National Sleep Foundation



Do you have more questions? Our website has the answers. Visit [www.GoodNeighborPharmacy.com](http://www.GoodNeighborPharmacy.com) for more information.



## *To Do List* Manage Your Time to Help Reduce Stress

Do you find yourself overwhelmed — and stressed — by the number and complexity of projects that need to be completed at work or home each day? Using time-management techniques can help reduce stress.

Try these tips:

- Plan each day. Write a to-do list, putting the most important tasks at the top. Keep a schedule of your daily activities to help minimize conflicts and last-minute rushes.
- Prioritize your tasks. Time-consuming but relatively unimportant tasks can consume a lot of your day.
- Say no to nonessential tasks. Consider your goals and schedule before agreeing to take on additional work.
- Delegate. Take a look at your to-do list and consider what you can pass on to someone else.
- Practice the 10-minute rule. Work on a dreaded task for 10 minutes each day. Once you get started, you may find you can finish it.

—Source: Mayo Clinic

## Did You Know...?

Water provides everything the body needs to restore fluids lost through metabolism, breathing, sweating and the removal of waste. It's the perfect beverage for quenching thirst and re-hydrating your system.

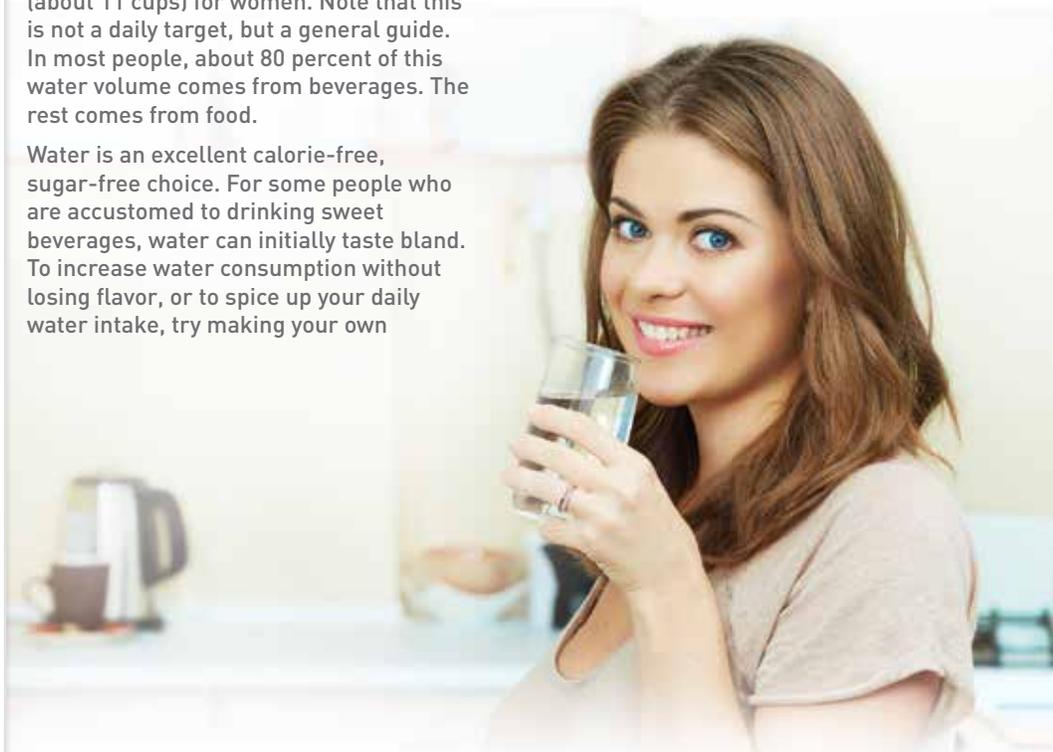
There is no one estimate for how much water the average American needs each day. Instead, the Institute of Medicine has set an adequate intake of 125 ounces (about 15 cups) for men and 91 ounces (about 11 cups) for women. Note that this is not a daily target, but a general guide. In most people, about 80 percent of this water volume comes from beverages. The rest comes from food.

Water is an excellent calorie-free, sugar-free choice. For some people who are accustomed to drinking sweet beverages, water can initially taste bland. To increase water consumption without losing flavor, or to spice up your daily water intake, try making your own

refreshing water-based beverages. Add any of the following to a cold glass or pitcher of water:

- Sliced citrus fruits or zest (lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit)
- Crushed fresh mint
- Peeled, sliced fresh ginger or sliced cucumber
- Crushed berries

—Source: Harvard School of Public Health



## Diabetes and Women

### How Are Women Affected by Diabetes?

Of the 25.6 million adults with diabetes in the U.S. in 2010 (the most recent statistics available), 12.6 million are women. The risk of heart disease, the most common complication of diabetes, is more serious among women than men. Among people with diabetes who have had a heart attack, women have lower survival rates and a poorer quality of life than men. Women with diabetes have a shorter life expectancy than women without diabetes, and women are at greater risk of blindness from diabetes than men. Death rates for women ages 25 to 44 years with diabetes are more than three times the rate for women without diabetes.

Women with diabetes must also plan childbearing carefully. It is especially important to keep blood-glucose levels as near to normal as possible before and during pregnancy, to protect both mother and baby. Pregnancy itself may affect insulin levels, as well as diabetes-related eye and kidney problems.

These statistics may seem daunting, but by working with your doctor and keeping blood-sugar levels under good control, women can do much to maintain diabetes control and to have a good quality of life.

—Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

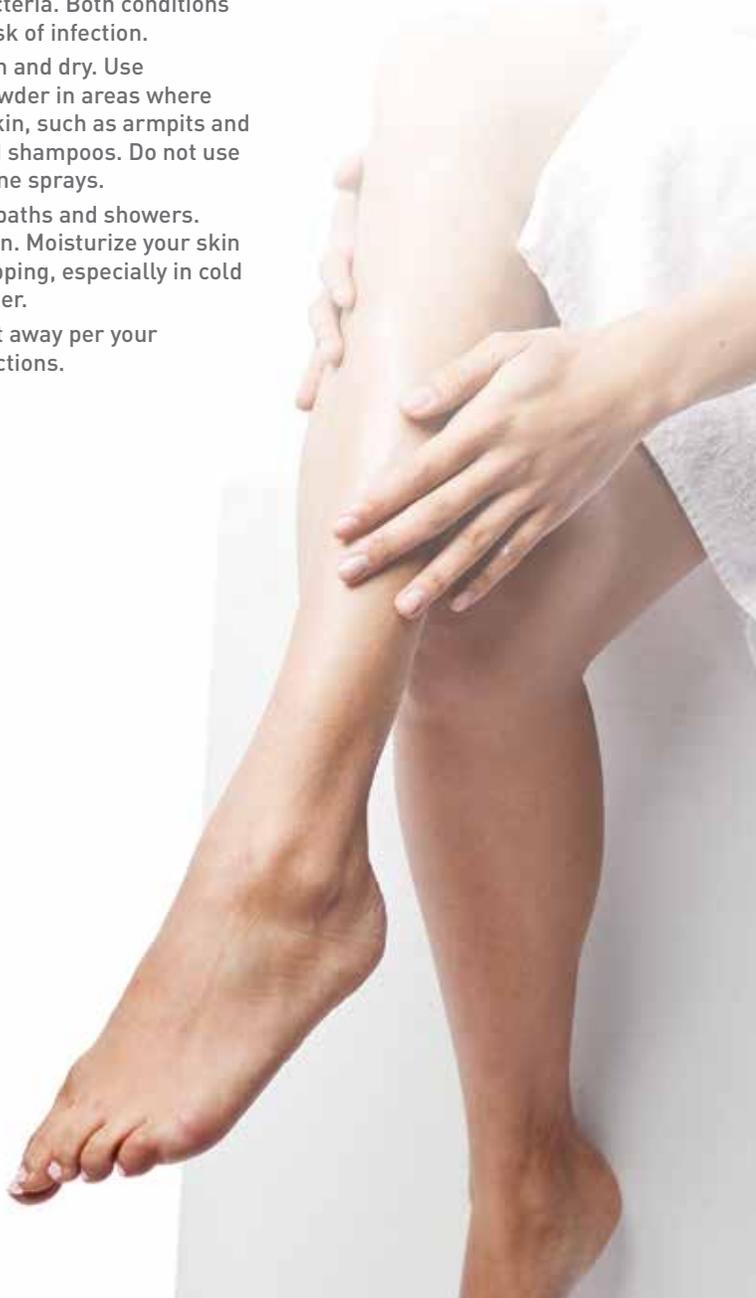
## Diabetes and Your Skin

Diabetes can affect every part of the body, including the skin. As many as one third of people with diabetes will have a skin disorder caused or affected by diabetes at some point. In fact, such problems are sometimes the first sign that a person has diabetes. Most skin conditions can be prevented or easily treated if caught early. There are things you can do to help protect your skin:

- Keep your diabetes well managed. People with high glucose levels tend to have dry skin and less ability to fend off harmful bacteria. Both conditions increase the risk of infection.
- Keep skin clean and dry. Use corn-starch powder in areas where skin touches skin, such as armpits and groin. Use mild shampoos. Do not use feminine hygiene sprays.
- Avoid very hot baths and showers. Prevent dry skin. Moisturize your skin to prevent chapping, especially in cold or windy weather.
- Treat cuts right away per your doctor's instructions.

- During cold, dry months, keep your home more humid. Bathe less, if possible.
- Stay hydrated by drinking water (preferably at least 64 ounces per day).
- See a dermatologist about skin problems that aren't easily resolved.
- Keep feet clean and dry and check daily for sores or cuts.

—Source: American Diabetes Association



### Diabetes in the News FDA: Insulin Pens and Cartridges Must Not Be Shared

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued an alert to healthcare professionals, reminding them to remind their patients that single-patient insulin pens and insulin cartridges should not be used to administer medication to multiple patients due to the potential risk of transmitting blood-borne pathogens such as HIV and hepatitis.

Insulin pens are pen-shaped injector devices that contain a disposable needle and either an insulin reservoir or an insulin cartridge. The devices typically contain enough insulin for a patient to self-administer several doses of insulin before the reservoir or cartridge is empty. All insulin pens are approved only for single-patient use (one device for only one patient).

The FDA is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and professional organizations to address infection-control issues related to insulin pens.

—Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

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# Don't Let Seasonal Allergies Keep You Down.

Sometimes, avoiding your allergy triggers just isn't enough. The good news is, your local *Good Neighbor Pharmacy* features affordable, effective products that can help relieve your symptoms. Talk to your pharmacist about what products are right for you or visit [GoodNeighborPharmacy.com/Allergies](http://GoodNeighborPharmacy.com/Allergies)



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† (U) Data, 52 week period ending 12/29/13.

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