

HealthConnection

GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY

Issue 4 • Respiratory Issues



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To Do List

Put a Healthy Little Spring in Your Routine

Spring is a great time to create healthy new habits and break the old. Here's a to-do list that will bring real results you can see and feel.

1. **Get moving.** The weather is warm and the days are getting longer, which makes it a perfect time to get active outside. Even a 20-minute walk around the neighborhood will put a spring in your step.
2. **Pump up the fruits and veggies.** Take advantage of the variety of produce (often local) that's available starting in the spring.
3. **Drink more water.** Drink plenty of water before exercising and throughout the day. It helps fight weight gain and fatigue. Sometimes you may think you're dragging because you're hungry, when what you really need is to be better hydrated.
4. **Protect your skin.** Use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Don't forget the hat and sunglasses!

—Source: The University of Tennessee Medical Center

Senior Health Update

Your Oral Health

About 40 percent of the adult population in the U.S. is estimated to have at least some loss of natural teeth. Incidence of tooth loss generally increases with age. While the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research reports that the prevalence of both partial and total tooth loss in seniors has decreased from the early 1970s, seniors over age 65 have lost an average of 13 teeth (including wisdom teeth) and 26 percent of seniors over age 65 have no remaining teeth.

Whether caring for natural teeth or dentures, seniors face a range of special oral concerns, including root decay and periodontal disease. You can keep your smile healthy by following a routine of proper oral care at home and by making regular dental visits for routine exams and cleaning.

If you have arthritis or limited use of your hands, try adapting the toothbrush for easy use. Insert the handle into a rubber ball or sponge hair curler or glue the toothbrush handle into a bicycle grip.

—Source: American Dental Hygienists' Association



Beat Spring Allergies!

Ah, spring. Budding flowers. Blooming trees. It's beautiful, but for those with allergies, it's a mixed blessing. Now's the time of year when allergy sufferers will want to reduce their exposure to allergy triggers. Here's help.

- Try to stay indoors as much as possible on dry, windy days. The best time to go outside is after a good rain, which helps clear pollen from the air.
- Delegate lawn mowing, weed pulling and other gardening chores that stir up allergens.
- Remove clothes you've worn outside; you may also want to shower to rinse pollen from your skin and hair.
- Don't hang laundry outside. Pollen can stick to sheets and towels.
- Wear a dust mask if you do outside chores.
- Check your local TV or radio station, your local newspaper or the web for pollen forecasts and current pollen levels.
- If high pollen counts are predicted, start taking allergy medications before your symptoms start.
- Close doors and windows at night or at any other time when pollen counts are high.
- Avoid outdoor activity in the early morning when pollen counts are highest.
- Use the air conditioning in your house and car.
- If you have forced-air heating or air conditioning in your house, use high-efficiency filters and follow regular maintenance schedules.

- Keep indoor air dry with a dehumidifier.
- Use a portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in your bedroom.
- Clean floors often with a vacuum cleaner that has a HEPA filter.

Several types of non-prescription medications can help ease allergy symptoms. They include:

- Oral antihistamines. Antihistamines can help relieve sneezing, itching, runny nose and watery eyes.
- Decongestants. Oral decongestants can provide temporary relief from nasal stuffiness. Decongestants also come in nasal sprays. Only use nasal decongestants for short-term relief. Long-term use of decongestant nasal sprays can actually worsen symptoms (rebound congestion).

For allergies that don't respond to non-prescription medications, talk with your doctor about other options, ranging from prescription medications to allergy shots.

Many doctors also recommend rinsing the nasal passages, also known as nasal irrigation. Doing this with a distilled, sterile saline solution is a quick, inexpensive and effective way to relieve nasal congestion. Rinsing directly flushes out mucus and allergens from your nose. Look for a squeeze bottle or a neti pot — a small container with a spout designed for nasal rinsing — at your pharmacy.

—Source: Mayo Clinic



Healthy Eating Plant Now for Great Summer Veggie Crop

Is it time to plant your garden with vegetables to ensure a healthy bounty for your summer table? The best way to know when to start sowing is to get a soil thermometer (less than \$5) and make sure the soil has reached at least 35 degrees. But it's generally a good bet to start sowing the coolest germinators — spinach and lettuce — first. A couple of weeks later, follow up with crops that like soil slightly warmer: kale, bok choy, radicchio, cabbage, collards, radishes, turnips, carrots, peas, broccoli, fava beans and onions. Wait another week before sowing Swiss chard, parsley, cauliflower and parsnips. It's going to be a healthy and delicious summer!

—Source: Chicago Botanic Garden



What's Happening at the Pharmacy?

Store Medications Away From Little Hands

Keep medicines and vitamins out of the reach of young children, both at home and while staying in hotels or as guests in others' homes.

When packing for a trip, keep medicines in their original child-resistant containers. Other containers, such as pill organizers and plastic bags, often lack child-safety features and can be easily accessed by young children.

While staying in a hotel, secure your medicines and vitamins in a location that your children cannot see or reach, such as a high cabinet or a passcode-protected hotel-room safe.

As a guest in another person's home, do not be shy about asking your host where to put your medicines and vitamins so they are out of the sight and reach of children.

Remember to never leave medicine or vitamins out on a table or countertop where children could reach them, no matter where you are. Always make sure the caps are locked and put medicines away every time they are used.

Program the national Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222, along with other emergency-contact numbers into your cell phone.

—Source: UpandAway.org, in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Kids' Corner

Let's Make a Growth Chart!

Want to know how tall you are? Can't wait to find out how much you've grown in a year? There are lots of ways to create a fun growth chart on the back of a door or on the wall in your bedroom. Just get an adult's permission, ask for help in collecting materials and have fun! Here are some ideas to get you started. You'll need a little help from an adult or an older sibling, but there's a lot you can do! (Note to parents: The first two ideas are great to consider if you want to bring the growth chart with you if you move.)

- Paint an old surfboard or paddleboard in your favorite colors using acrylic paint. Ask an adult to mount it securely on the wall and to add the measurements, in inches, in black permanent marker.
- Ask an adult to purchase a piece of solid-color fabric or felt (in your favorite color!) six feet tall by six inches wide. The adult can add the measurements on the right-hand side with fabric paint and then you can decorate the rest of the fabric with fabric paint, glitter or other decorations that can be attached with fabric glue. Ask the adult to mount your hanging growth chart on the wall.
- Ask an adult to draw a tree, about six feet tall, in pencil right on the wall. Make sure the trunk is wide enough to add the measurements in inches in black permanent marker. You get to help paint the tree. Have fun and get creative! Do you want to add a bird on one of the branches? A forest creature? A cloud or two? This fun project is great for the whole family.



Health Q&A

How Common Is Foot Pain?

Q: I'm suffering from chronic foot pain. Is it something to worry about? How common is it?

A: The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) recently surveyed 1,000 U.S. adults ages 18 and older and found the majority (77 percent) said they have experienced foot pain at some point in their lives. Foot pain can have a profound impact on a person's quality of life. It can restrict a person's activities — walking, exercising, working or playing with children or grandchildren. People surveyed said they would exercise more (39 percent) and participate in more activities (41 percent) if it weren't for their foot pain.

"It's not surprising to see how many people are affected by foot pain, when survey results show that we view our feet as the least important body part in terms of our overall health and wellbeing," says APMA president Frank Spinosa, DPM. "Our feet are literally and figuratively the furthest things from our minds."

That needs to change, he adds. Foot pain is never normal, and it's critical that anyone experiencing chronic pain seeks care from an expert, says Spinosa. To find a podiatrist in your area, visit <http://www.apma.org/Directory/FindAPodiatrist.cfm>.

—Source: American Podiatric Medical Association



Did You Know...?

Owning a pet can be one of the best things you can do to improve your health. (And it's fun!) A dog's need for daily walks can be a great motivator when it comes to getting more exercise. A pet can help reduce anxiety and it requires your attention. Playing with a dog, cat or other pet can help switch your focus and help make your daily problems seem not so large.

Pets are also a source of physical contact and comfort and may help decrease loneliness and depression, according to the National Institutes of Health. Companionship, physical contact, increased fitness, entertainment, love... A pet can provide all of that and more.

Dogs, in particular, can also improve your health by improving your social life and getting you out of the house to interact with friends and neighbors at the local dog park, at a dog-training class or at a dog-friendly outdoor café.

Consider adopting a furry friend. You'll greatly improve an animal's life — and your own!

—Source: National Institutes of Health



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Diabetes and Women

How Can Diabetes Affect My Gynecological Health?

Hormone changes before and during a woman's menstrual period can make her blood sugar run higher or lower than usual. Similarly, hormone changes during and after the menopausal transition may affect blood sugar. Talk with your doctor if you have problems with fluctuating blood-sugar levels around the time of your period or as you are going through menopause. You may need to adjust your medication or check your blood sugar more often during this time.

Blood-sugar levels also can be tied to vaginal yeast infections. High blood sugar can often lead to a yeast infection and can make it harder to get rid of one. A yeast infection can cause itching, burning and white vaginal discharge. If you have these symptoms, see your doctor to get the right treatment. You can help prevent yeast infections by wearing cotton underwear and maintaining good blood-sugar control. Avoid douching, body wash, perfumed sprays or wipes.

—Source: Vanderbilt University

Get Fit

Healthy Breakfast = Healthy Day

The old saying is true: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Breakfast provides you with the energy and nutrients that lead to increased concentration at work and at play. Studies show that breakfast can be important in maintaining a healthy body weight, too.

If you haven't eaten breakfast, hunger sets in long before it's time for lunch, and many people who have not eaten breakfast snack on foods that are high in fat and sugar. People who skip breakfast are unlikely to make up their daily requirement for some vitamins and minerals that a simple breakfast would have provided.

To prepare a healthy breakfast, simply pick two to three foods, including at least one from each of the following food groups:

- Bread and grain (cereal, toast, etc.)
- Milk and milk products (low-fat yogurt, low-fat milk, etc.)
- Fruit or vegetable group (bananas, apples, carrots, etc.)

Pick up portable breakfast items at the grocery store so you have no excuses when you need to eat on the run. Grabbing a boiled egg and a banana, a piece of toast with peanut butter and an apple, or low-fat yogurt with berries is an easy way to grab breakfast and eat it when you get to work or school, if time is tight. Got time at home in the morning? Make a veggie omelette. You can shorten preparation time by chopping vegetables ahead of time.

You can fix and consume a healthy breakfast in 15 minutes or less. Before you go to bed each night, decide what you are going to eat for breakfast the next morning. You can save time by putting out the box of cereal or cutting up some fruit the night before.

—Source: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health



Diabetes, Pre-Diabetes, Taking a Toll on U.S. Economy

The economic burden of diabetes in America continues to climb, exceeding more than \$322 billion in excess medical costs per year, or more than \$1,000 for every American, according to a study published recently in the medical journal *Diabetes Care*. Additionally, increased costs associated with pre-diabetes and undiagnosed diabetes highlight the growing importance of prevention and early intervention.

The study, which follows up on a similar report published in 2010 and expands upon data released last year, shows a 48-percent overall jump in direct and indirect costs associated with diabetes over just five years. In an accompanying editorial, *Diabetes Care* editors write: "The time to act is now. These data clearly should signal a call for action."

—Source: American Diabetes Association



Your Diet

Sugar Consumption and Diabetes: What's the Connection?

Some people assume that diabetes is caused by eating too much sugar. The answer is not so simple. Type 1 diabetes is caused by genetics and unknown factors that trigger the onset of the disease. Type 2 diabetes is caused by genetics and lifestyle factors. Being overweight does increase your risk for developing type 2 diabetes, and a diet high in calories from any source contributes to weight gain. Research has shown that drinking sugary drinks is linked to type 2 diabetes.

The American Diabetes Association recommends that people should avoid drinking sugar-sweetened beverages to help prevent diabetes. This includes beverages such as regular soda, fruit punch, fruit drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks, sweet tea and other sugary drinks. These will raise blood-glucose levels — and can provide several hundred calories in just one serving.

—Sources: American Diabetes Association

Living with Diabetes Poor Circulation and Your Feet

Poor circulation (blood flow) can make your feet less able to fight infection and to heal. Diabetes causes blood vessels of the foot and leg to narrow and harden. You can control some of the things that cause poor blood flow. Don't smoke. Smoking makes arteries harden faster. Also, follow your healthcare provider's advice for keeping your blood pressure and cholesterol under control.

If your feet are cold, you may be tempted to warm them. Unfortunately, if your feet cannot feel heat, it is easy for you to burn them with hot water, hot water bottles or heating pads. The best way to help cold feet is to wear warm socks.

Exercise is good for poor circulation. It stimulates blood flow in the legs and feet. Walk in sturdy, good-fitting, comfortable shoes but don't walk when you have open sores.

—Source: American Diabetes Association



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