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The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

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Remember, you are unique, so don't compare yourself to others.

Envision a NEW YOU

Our thoughts have a powerful impact on self-esteem. Having too high an opinion of yourself can cause as many problems as being overly self-critical. Regarding yourself as better than others can lead you to believe that you deserve special privileges, and that can get in the way of success. In contrast, your self-worth may need a boost if you put little value on your opinions and ideas, believe others are more capable than you, or are unable to accept a compliment.

Healthy self-esteem helps you feel secure and worthwhile. People with healthy self-esteem tend to have an accurate view of themselves and often do well in school, work and relationships. *So how do you get a more balanced self-view?*

Identify trouble spots. Are you tormented by memories of situations that ended badly for you? Mentally replay a revised scenario with a successful outcome.

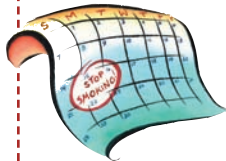
Listen to self-talk. Each of us has an

internal dialogue. Are these thoughts mostly negative about yourself or others? Correct distorted thinking and stop comparing yourself to others.

Do a reality check. Ask for honest feedback from people you trust, and listen nondefensively.

Grow up. Are you still stuck with childhood labels? Learn to love yourself unconditionally, develop your strengths and remember that you're unique.

Smokers: Your Dentist Wants You to Know ...



See a dentist or hygienist if you experience any of these warning signs: red, swollen, tender, bleeding or receding gums; painful chewing; sensitive or loose teeth; or persistent bad breath. As a smoker, you're more likely to experience problems with your gums and teeth. *What happens?*

Tooth plaque (calculus) accumulates, requiring professional cleaning. The bacteria found in calculus can destroy tissue, causing the gums to pull away from the teeth.

Deep pockets can develop between teeth and gums. Here, bacteria may flourish, damaging the tissue supporting your teeth.

Your teeth can become loose and painful. Periodontal disease can progress. Daily smokers older than age 65 are twice as likely as nonsmokers to have missing teeth.

Healing may not go so well after periodontal treatment — but this effect may be reversed if a patient quits smoking before treatment.

No substitutes — Cigarettes are not the only risky products. Users of pipes, cigars and smokeless tobacco experience more tooth loss than nonusers.

For healthier gums, floss daily and brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste — and stop using tobacco. Great smoking cessation resources can be found at www.smokefree.gov.

Kicking the habit can also reduce your risk of certain types of cancer, mouth sores, loss of taste and even facial wrinkling — now that's a lot to smile about.



LONGEVITY CORNER

Viewer Discretion Advised. Is your television hazardous to your health? Watching TV is usually a sedentary activity, and exercise reduces your risk of heart attacks, stroke and diabetes. Australian researchers did the math and concluded that for every hour of TV you watch, you shorten your life span by about 20 minutes. Americans watch an average of 35 hours of TV a week — almost a day and a half — causing them to die about two years earlier. So either hop on a stationary bike or treadmill while watching or turn off the TV and get moving.

— Zorba Paster, M.D.

Considering getting pregnant?

You may want to read "Ensuring a Full-Term Pregnancy" on other side.

Bust Out of the Winter Blahs. Just because it's winter doesn't mean it's time to curl up on the sofa. Move more and you'll find that exercise improves your mood, boosts your heart health and benefits your waistline, all at the same time.

Women's Health: Ensuring a Full-Term Pregnancy



Babies who arrive preterm (less than 37 weeks) are at higher risk for serious health problems, developmental delays, learning and behavioral issues, and even mortality. They may also grow into adults with diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. These risks are greatest for the youngest premies (earlier than 28 weeks), though late preterm babies (34 to 36 weeks) are often affected too. **Here's what you can do to help ensure a full-term pregnancy:**

If you're considering pregnancy, make a preconception appointment with a health care provider, especially if you have chronic health problems, certain uterine or cervical abnormalities, or if you've delivered

prematurely before. You may need to take prenatal vitamins, improve your diet and achieve a healthy weight before conceiving. It's important to control chronic health conditions and stop habits such as smoking and drinking alcohol. Certain drugs, medications and supplements should be avoided during pregnancy too. Learn more.

If you're already pregnant, keep all your prenatal appointments and follow through on recommendations. Keep emergency numbers handy and immediately report symptoms, such as more than eight contractions per hour (they may feel like cramps); low, dull backache, pelvic pain or pressure; diarrhea; vaginal bleeding; or watery discharge, especially if your doctor says you are at high risk. Limit stress and take care of your teeth (gum disease is associated with pre-term labor). You may also need to reduce physical activities or time on your feet.

If preterm labor occurs despite your best efforts, your health care provider can help by suggesting rest and fluids or more aggressive interventions such as progesterone treatment.

What's the best cholesterol-lowering diet?

When people increased consumption of soy protein (soy milk or soybeans), sticky fiber (oats, barley), plant sterol esters (found in sterol-enriched margarines) and nuts (such as almonds, walnuts or peanuts), they experienced a 13% reduction of LDL cholesterol in six months (versus 3% on a low-fat diet).

If you have borderline cholesterol levels, these foods might benefit you — but don't stop taking your cholesterol-lowering medication without your doc's OK.



To learn about meditation, go to: <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/meditation>

Experience the Present (Really)

Take a moment to notice your breath — for example, the sound, the rhythm and the movement of your chest. Inhale deeply through your nose and see if you can perceive any odors. How many different sounds can you hear? Can you feel the pressure of your clothes on your skin or the sensation of the seat or floor under you?

Attending to your breath and your environment is an example of mindfulness, a practice of focusing your awareness on the here and now. It is more a matter of being than doing — simply paying attention to what is happening within you and around you at this very moment. Many people do this as a form of meditation, sitting quietly for 20 minutes or more regularly, while attending to their breathing or thoughts.

Why practice mindfulness? It may reduce blood pressure, improve your mood and help you cope with stress. Studies have shown that mindfulness meditation decreases symptoms of irritable bowel disease and fibromyalgia, enhances immunity and causes positive changes in the brain. Other research has found mindfulness training helpful in conditions such as chronic pain, psoriasis and anxiety.

So the next time you find yourself regretting the past or worrying about the future, try taking a few moments to consider what's happening right now.

*"He who takes medicine and neglects to diet wastes the skills of his doctors."
~Chinese proverb*



Smart moves for your personal wellness program are at www.personalbest.com/extras/jan12tools.