



Move More, Sit Less

Are you sitting down? Better stand up as you read this: Sitting has joined the list of major risk factors for chronic disease in America, along with high blood pressure, smoking and unhealthy cholesterol.

Researchers have connected lengthy sitting to obesity, metabolic syndrome and premature death from any cause, apart from other risks, such as smoking, even in people who regularly exercise. When you're sitting, your muscles aren't moving, so metabolism slows down. >> *Continued on the other side.*

Building Health Care Savings

As medical care costs continue to climb, chances are your premiums, deductibles or copayments – or all 3 – will rise. But some simple steps will help you get the most out of your health care dollars:

Know which services your plan covers. Take advantage of your plan's preventive screenings. Also confirm the need for prescribed medicines, tests and procedures. Always discuss alternative solutions with your health care providers.

Find cheaper drugs. If available, use your plan's lower-cost mail order drug service. Consider lower-cost generic prescription drugs if available.

Follow your health care provider's advice fully. If not, you risk having to restart your medication or treatment, which can cost time and money.

Fund tax-advantaged accounts to pay for many health and medical expenses:

- ✓ Health savings account – In an eligible high-deductible health plan, the current contribution maximum is \$3,300.
- ✓ Flexible spending account – This is used to pay for out-of-pocket health expenses, such as copays and deductibles with pre-tax dollars.



Join workplace wellness programs (if available) such as smoking cessation or diabetes prevention.

*Bottom line:
Staying healthy is the single best way to save on health expenses.*

Sprain or Strain?



A sprain is a stretched or torn ligament – the tissue connecting your bones to your joints. Sprains often result from a sudden, twisting motion that causes mild tears to complete ruptures. Joints most susceptible to sprains are ankles and knees.

A strain is a stretched or torn muscle or tendon. Tendons connect your muscles to your bones. Strains are caused by twisting or pulling tendons, resulting in minute tears in the tissue or more severe damage. Strains are very common in the back and leg muscles.

A sprain or strain may cause pain, some swelling or difficulty moving the injured area. Sprains can take longer than strains to heal, and they may weaken the joint.

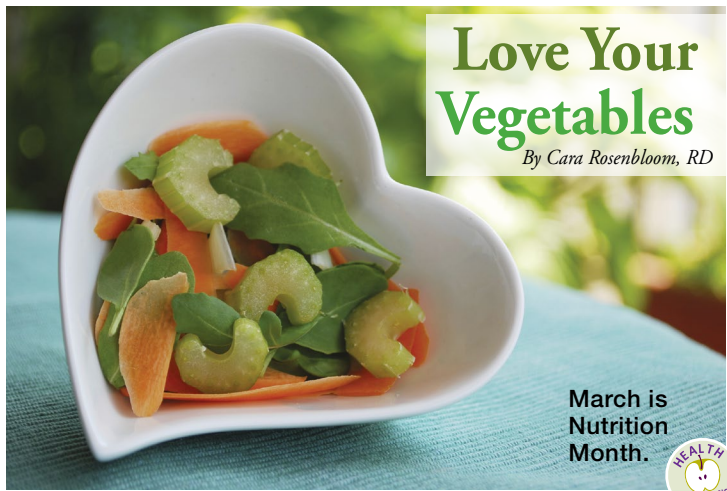
Get some relief. Avoid using the injured area. Rest it elevated, and ice it several times a day for 10 to 15 minutes. Anti-inflammatory medicine may reduce pain and swelling.

Seek medical care if: The injury is numb or deformed, or becomes weaker, more painful, swollen or discolored. Severe injuries might require physical therapy.

Preventing sprains and strains: Many people get injured playing sports or doing things that are too physically demanding. Be cautious.

- Avoid exercise or sports when you're tired or in pain.
- Be fit enough to perform your sport or exercise.
- Wear protective equipment when playing.

*“A healthy outside starts from the inside.”
– Robert Ulrich*



Love Your Vegetables

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

March is Nutrition Month.



Putting more vegetables on your plate is a smart idea.

Why? Like fruits, vegetables have a high-fiber and high-water content, which helps you feel full. And they're low in calories with virtually no fat – great for helping you reach and maintain a healthy weight.

Vegetables provide a wide array of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that may help ward off disease. Their nutrients have been linked to a lower risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer.



Steam or stir-fry to retain nutrients in vegetables. Most of the nutrients in boiled vegetables end up in the water. Soup is a good option because you consume the liquid that the vegetables are cooked in. And, avoid deep frying your vegetables (sorry, onion rings and fries). *Bonus:* Heat kills harmful microbes.

Have vegetables daily at every meal – and don't forget snacks. *Some ideas:* Try raw beets in salad, a steamed broccoli side dish or soup made from roasted butternut squash. Snack on raw carrot sticks. Sauté chopped spinach in garlic and olive oil and add to whole-grain pasta.



And enjoy all the colors of the vegetable rainbow – from purple eggplant to bright red pepper.

Move More, Sit Less >> *Continued from the other side.*

Bottom line: Get up and move more every day. During long periods of sitting:

- Stand up while talking on the phone.
- Get off the couch while watching TV.
- Schedule 10-minute activity breaks a few times a day.
- Take a break to do some chores.
- Combine meetings with walking.



While daily exercise can't reverse the effects of sitting, it's still key to better health – provided we don't sit down the rest of the time.

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Can we prevent colon cancer?

Yes. Colorectal cancer is often avoidable with regular screening.

The colon, or large bowel, is where food is processed to supply energy and rid the body of waste.



How does screening help fight the disease? Colon cancer almost always starts with a slow-growing polyp on the lining of the colon or rectum. You can fight colon cancer by detecting and removing polyps before they become cancerous.

Begin colon cancer screening at age 50, or sooner if you have these increased risks:

- A personal history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps.
- A personal history of inflammatory bowel disease (ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease).
- A strong family history of colorectal cancer or polyps.

Talk with your provider about the screening options best suited to your health profile.

Studies suggest obesity may raise your risk of colon cancer.

In addition to losing excess weight, aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity, such as walking, on 5 or more days a week. Vigorous activity for 45 minutes 5 or more days a week, such as running, offers even more protection.



National Poison Prevention Week is March 16 to 22.

Poison Prevention



According to Poison Prevention.org, more than 2 million poisonings are reported each year to poison control centers nationwide. More than 90% of these poisonings occur in the home. Here's how you can reduce that statistic:

- ✓ **Buy** products with child-resistant packaging when available.
- ✓ **Store** all medicines and vitamins locked and out of reach.
- ✓ **Keep** products in original containers.
- ✓ **Put the Poison Control Center's number (1-800-222-1222)** on speed dial on your home and cell phones. Post it on the refrigerator or family message board.
- ✓ **Use** cabinet locks wherever you keep cleaning products, toiletries, makeup and medicines.
- ✓ **Store** purses out of the reach of young children, especially if you carry makeup or medicines in them.
- ✓ **Don't** grow poisonous or toxic plants if you have small children at home.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/Mar14tools.

Next Month: Sleep to Better Health