

TOPHEALTH®

We Care About Your Health

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

MAY 2011



Sodium Connections

WAYS TO CUT SODIUM FROM YOUR DIET. Turn the page.

The American Heart Association recommends limiting daily salt to less than 1,500 milligrams (mg) in order to reduce the risk of high blood pressure, damage to the heart, kidneys and blood vessels — and possibly even obesity. Yet the average person in the U.S. consumes about 3,436 mg per day. While 1,500 mg represents a substantial reduction, cutting down may be easier than you think.

[Quick Guide to Healthy Home-cooked Meals ... Other side](#)

Wellness at Home



Staying active may be more enjoyable when you do it in the good company of others. Try some of these ideas along with your friends or loved ones:

- ✓ **VISIT** farms to pick apples, strawberries or peaches
- ✓ **GO** for walks after dinner
- ✓ **TAKE** a pet for a run or jog
- ✓ **GO** "geocaching" for fun and exercise (see www.geocaching.com)
- ✓ **RENT** a paddleboat or canoe at a nearby lake or river

Your wellness action plan will be more successful if you set limits on "screen time" (computers, TVs, and video games) and schedule regular times to get moving. Children and adults alike can benefit greatly from at least one hour of physical exercise a day. For more ideas, see www.shapeup.org.

Strengthen Your Bones

Bone is living tissue that constantly replenishes itself: Old bone is reabsorbed into the body while new bone is added. New formation is favored up to about age 30, and then absorption slowly begins to win out. **When bone absorption vastly outstrips formation, osteoporosis ("porous bone") can develop.**

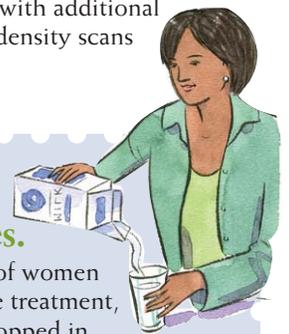
Osteoporosis risk factors include female gender, Asian/Caucasian ethnicity, advancing age, positive family history and a small body frame. However, the disease can occur without these factors, so everyone should know some key recommendations:

Diet: Get enough calcium over a lifetime to keep bones strong — check with your physician as to how much. Eat foods that are rich in this mineral: low-fat dairy products, dark leafy greens, salmon and sardines, tofu, almonds and fortified foods such as cereal or orange juice. Vitamin D, important for calcium absorption, can be obtained from fortified foods or from 15 minutes of daily sun exposure. Some people may need multivitamins containing vitamin D as well.

Exercise: You can strengthen your bones through a variety of weight-bearing exercises — walking, jogging, climbing stairs, weight training, tennis or dance.

Potential concerns: Smokers tend to absorb less calcium from their diets, while regular alcohol use (over 2 to 3 ounces a day) can damage the skeleton even in young men and women. Though useful, long-term use of some medications (including antacids, thyroid and antiseizure drugs) can also cause bone loss.

New guidelines: Women under 60 with additional risk factors should be eligible for bone density scans without co-pays or deductibles.



LONGEVITY CORNER

News Flash on Hot Flashes.

Hot flashes are a common complaint of women during menopause. The most effective treatment, hormone replacement therapy, has dropped in popularity due to findings that it can increase the risk of heart attacks and stroke. A recent study suggested that medications called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs, such as the antidepressant fluoxetine) may reduce hot flashes by 50 percent or more. Other treatments, such as over-the-counter supplements, have shown disappointing research results. If you have hot flashes, consider reviewing the medication options with your healthcare provider.

— Zorba Paster, MD



Smart moves for reaching a heart healthy best are at www.personalbest.com/extras/may11tools.

GOODNESS from Scratch

Eating home-cooked meals can be a good way to trim fat, sugar and salt from your diet. However, many people find that their hectic schedules leave little time for cooking — but with a little planning and prep work, homemade meals can be quick and hassle-free.

① Create a recipe repertoire.

Keep cookbooks easily accessible, mark favorite dishes for handy reference or put recipes in a binder with the quickest meals listed first. Get new ideas from library cookbooks and websites such as www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov.

② **Plan meals in advance.** Make menus for a week or two and generate a list of required ingredients. To save money, plan meals around what's on sale.

③ **Stock up on staples** such as 100-percent whole-grain pasta, cereals, bread, rice, canned tomatoes and beans, garlic, onions, low-salt bouillon or stock, eggs, nuts, fresh or frozen produce (some can be steamed in their bags), lean meats, oil, fresh or dried herbs and spices. Chop fresh herbs and freeze in a small ice cube tray.

④ **Prepare a roasted chicken**, chopped vegetables, fruit salad, soup and a green salad on the weekends. Make healthy snacks to go — try a trail mix of nuts and dried fruit or make muffins. Put fruits on the counter for easy access. **More tips:** Chop and mix omelet ingredients the night before ... remember to defrost items ahead of time ... cook two meals and freeze one or start a crock-pot dish for a hot and tasty dinner.

➔ **All aboard:** Designate kitchen roles for each family member — kids can learn good nutrition from the start.



Ways to Cut Sodium from Your Diet

Try lemon juice, herbs and spices, hot sauce, onion or garlic powder, flavored oils, pepper and vinegar instead of salt.

Help is on the way: Some major food manufacturers are responding to the Food and Drug Administration's call to reduce the salt in processed food, making it easier for consumers to limit their sodium intake.

Challenge No. 1: 77 percent of salt consumed comes from packaged, processed and restaurant food.

Pick products with the lowest sodium (salt) content per serving (aim for 140 mg or less) by checking nutritional labels. Choose unsalted, low-sodium and sodium-free items whenever possible. Major sources of sodium include: cheese products, tomato sauce or juice, soups, condiments, canned foods, prepared mixes and lunch meats. When dining out, ask for low-sodium menu choices, have salad dressing on the side and ask for little or no cheese.

Challenge No. 2: Medications can be a source of high amounts of sodium.

Scan the ingredients of over-the-counter drugs (such as antacids) for sodium, and look for low-sodium versions. If you use bicarbonate of soda, look for no-sodium versions.

Challenge No. 3: How do I cook without salt?

Choose raw ingredients without added salt, especially when purchasing broth, butter, bouillon, soup, nuts and sauces.

NEXT MONTH: HANDLING HEADACHES

Act Like a Kid Again

Did you like swimming, bowling or biking when you were growing up? They are all great activities for adult bodies, too. **Or maybe you enjoyed ...** Catch ...



Try joining a company softball or volleyball team ... Wrestling ... Consider judo, aikido or other martial arts ... Cheerleading ... Modern aerobics classes with a dance flavor will get you moving again. **Join in:** Find clubs for your favorite activities — you'll have fun socializing while getting a good workout.

Know Your Numbers: Blood Pressure

Have you had your blood pressure checked recently? High blood pressure (hypertension) — increases your risk for several conditions, including heart disease and stroke.

Prehypertension means you're likely to develop high blood pressure unless you take steps to control it. During High Blood Pressure Education Month, consider the numbers:

140/90 = high

120/80-139/89 = prehypertension

<120/80 = normal



“Shared laughter creates a bond of friendships. When people laugh together, they cease to be young and old, teacher and pupils, worker and boss. They become a single group of human beings.” ~W. Lee Grant