

# TOPHEALTH®

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska** UNIVERSITY-WIDE  
BENEFITS COMMITTEE

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## WHAT IS A LOCAVORE?

In the quest to eat fresh, healthy food and be kind to the environment, a movement has sprung up to eat food produced locally. By eating vegetables grown nearby, for instance, “locavores” believe they are supporting local farmers and businesses, getting fresher food and being “green” by reducing the amount of fuel required to transport food over long distances.

Some critics have argued that locally produced food is not always more eco-friendly because it is sometimes more efficient to grow food and transport it from a more distant location — for example, if it is grown on a larger scale or if the climate is more suitable for farming elsewhere.

*Interested in the locavore approach? You can try the following:*

- **SHOP AT FARMERS MARKETS.** This supports local farmers and bakers.
- **READ LABELS** or ask your grocer about the country or area of origin of foods. Your supermarket may start buying more locally grown food if enough shoppers request it.
- **JOIN A LOCAL CSA** (community-supported agriculture) program. These programs allow you to purchase a share of the crop at a nearby farm and get a weekly allotment of fresh produce. Shares are often a good bargain too.

*Hungry for more?* Whether they are fresh from local farmers, frozen or canned, eating more fruits and vegetables is the best choice for good nutrition.

## LONGEVITY CORNER

**Mammogram Misses.** The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends mammograms every two years from age 50 until age 75 for women at low risk (no family or personal history of breast cancer). The American Cancer Society differs, suggesting earlier and more frequent testing. But keep in mind the “false negative” rate. The NIH estimates that 20 percent of all breast cancers are missed by mammograms. A normal mammogram is only one piece of information. If you find a breast lump, seek medical advice promptly. — **Zorba Paster, M.D.**



1. Active play with your children or grandkids can burn off as many calories as a brisk walk.
2. The oldest person to finish a full-length marathon was 100 years old.
3. You may be training too hard if you can't carry on a conversation while exercising.
4. To burn the most fat, you should focus your strength building on the major muscle groups in the butt, thighs and chest.
5. “Doga” is a type of exercise where people practice yoga moves with their canine companions.
6. Raising your activity level can lower your blood pressure by 4 to 9 mm Hg — the same reduction in blood pressure delivered by some antihypertensive medications.
7. You could live two hours longer for every hour you exercise — even if you start in middle age.
8. You lose about a pound of lean muscle mass per year after age 30 — but lifting weights 2-3 times per week can prevent muscles from turning to fat.

**What percentage of adults with arthritis is under 65 years old?**

About 20%  About 40%  About 60%

See Page 2 for the answer...

## Living Well With Arthritis



One in six Americans has arthritis, a painful condition that can cause stiffness and complicate even simple tasks.

*Managing arthritis pain often begins with lifestyle changes:*

- **Know your triggers:** Keep track of conditions that worsen stiffness or pain. These can vary from cold weather to food allergies.
- **Slim down:** Obesity is the leading risk factor for osteoarthritis. Each pound of body weight exerts 3-4 pounds of pressure on your knees. Cut 100 calories per day (e.g., 8 ounces of soda) and burn another 100 (exercise for 20 minutes) to lose 20 pounds a year.
- **Get moving:** Low-impact exercise, such as swimming, builds muscles and reduces pressure on joints.
- **Modify your environment:** Make tasks easier by adding a grab rail to a bathtub or using a bottle-opening device. Splints can also give added support and relief.
- **Use mind over matter:** Cognitive therapy can reduce pain symptoms, as can meditation or guided imagery.
- **Consult specialists:** A physical therapist can demonstrate how to accomplish tasks or exercise with less pain; a massage may decrease muscle tension. Remember to follow your doctor's recommendations too.

*Not just for seniors: Nearly 60 percent of those with arthritis are under age 65.*

*“Health is the thing that makes you feel that now is the best time of the year.”*

*~ Franklin P. Adams*

**NEXT MONTH:** Beat Back Pain and Strain

## Food Additives 101

People have been enhancing their food for centuries — think salt and spices — and today there are thousands of food additives. Whether we should eat these altered foods is hotly debated. *Consider both sides:*

### THE PROS

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) permits only approved additives — those “generally recognized as safe” — and many improve food in some way. Vitamins increase the nutritional quality of foods, and preservatives increase food safety and shelf life. Some added ingredients make food look and taste better.

### THE CONS

The FDA can never be absolutely certain about safety and has recalled some additives. The American Academy of Pediatrics and other groups are concerned about risks to children. Some people react to substances such as dyes, and people with phenylketonuria (PKU) can have life-threatening responses to

foods with phenylalanine (e.g., aspartame). Manufacturers color food purely for marketing purposes, and “natural flavorings” can be as processed as artificial ones. Additives can be used to mask low-quality food and are even in “fresh” products such as meats. Lastly, many food additives used in combination have not been tested for safety.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Eating foods with additives is a personal decision. A good approach might be to learn more about them. Resources: [www.fda.gov/food/foodingredientpackaging/ucm094211.htm](http://www.fda.gov/food/foodingredientpackaging/ucm094211.htm) and [www.cspinet.org/reports/chemcuisine.htm](http://www.cspinet.org/reports/chemcuisine.htm). If you have questions or a possible problem with a food, talk to a dietitian, your doctor or your health care provider.



## DRUGS THAT RAISE BLOOD PRESSURE?

Did you know that some prescription and over-the-counter medications can raise your blood pressure and even interfere with antihypertensive medications? *Here are some drugs to watch for:*

**Painkillers**, such as acetaminophen, can increase your risk of developing high blood pressure when taken daily, though occasional use may be fine. The same is true for nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen, meloxicam, naproxen and certain migraine medications.



**Venlafaxine, bupropion, desipramine and phenelzine** are antidepressants that can lift your mood — and your blood pressure.

**Decongestants** (pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine and oxymetazoline) are often contained in multi-symptom cold and allergy medication. If you have blood pressure concerns, it's best to avoid these.

**Immunosuppressants** can affect the fluid balance in the body, causing blood pressure to rise.

**Methylphenidate**, a drug commonly used for attention deficit disorder (ADD), can cause your heart to beat faster and irregularly and negatively affect pressure readings.



Smart moves for your personal wellness program are at [www.personalbest.com/extras/may12tools](http://www.personalbest.com/extras/may12tools).