

TOPHEALTH®

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

We Care About Your Health

SEPTEMBER 2011

4 Ways to Let Go of Stress

1 CONNECT with nature. Strolling through a garden, cuddling with a pet or hiking through the woods can all benefit you.

2 INTERRUPT worries and other unhelpful habits. The more you worry, the more it becomes an ingrained habit. Redirecting your thoughts allows you to use your mental energy in healthier ways.

3 DO things for others. Random acts of kindness generate positive energy — when you're not already doing too much, that is.

4 EXPRESS yourself. Find an outlet for your feelings, whether through conversation or writing in a journal.

The bottom line: If your mood affects your work or home life or if you're engaging in addictive or other self-destructive behaviors, refer to your health plan or ask your health care provider for help.



Healthy Eats for Back to School

It's back-to-school time and if you're a busy working parent, it can be hard to juggle healthy meals around school and work. Even if you don't have kids, healthy eating options can be hard to come by at work and on the go.



Did you know? Good nutrition has been linked to better grades and fewer behavior problems in children. For grown-ups, good nutrition serves as the fuel for your day. **Remember these basics:**

Focus on serving balanced, fresh, simple and portable meals. Wraps work well for a combination of nutritious foods. Convenient and easy to handle, they are a nice change from the standard sandwich.

Put an emphasis on breakfast. For kids and grown-ups alike, breakfast deserves a strong showing. Eat fruit first, and include whole grain cereal or no-sodium oatmeal flavored with a dash of brown sugar. Or have an egg for some lean protein, and add whole-wheat toast, fruit, and orange juice or milk.

Plan meals in advance. Stay on track by plotting out and posting a meal plan on the refrigerator. Use the plan when you're grocery shopping.

Get kids involved in meal planning and preparation. Kids can even help with the cooking when time allows. Even if it's just once a week, kids love quality time. Why not make an event of cooking a healthy meal together at home?

More ... Read school lunch menus in advance to make your best choice ... keep junk food and sugary drinks out of the house ... keep ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables on hand for snacking.

Treats have their place. Figure out how to make treats a special event rather than a daily option, and then try to stick to a plan.

More Steps for Better Health

A brisk daily walk can not only make you look and feel better, it may also help prevent heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and depression. These routines are catching on!

Just STARTING out ... Walking should feel good. Keep a natural stride. Start gradually with one 15-to-30-minute walk a day, three days a week at an easy pace. In no time, you should feel able to walk a little farther for more minutes.

Getting to a NEW LEVEL ... Walking can burn up to 100 calories per mile, depending on your weight and speed. As you get used to walking, challenge yourself by increasing speed, distance or time. Try new courses such as walking uphill or going on a challenging hike.

Reaching a new PERSONAL BEST ... You've gotten used to challenging yourself. It helps to have a race or an upcoming event on your calendar so you have something to train for — walking really counts!

Doctor's
Dictionary

Gastritis. The simple answer?
Stomach trouble. Other side ⇨

5 Ways to Control Your Cholesterol

Read food labels. The details on the nutrition facts panel can help you make healthy choices. Key areas for cholesterol control: total fat and each type of fat, cholesterol, and calories from fat per serving. Monounsaturated fats — from nuts,

avocados and olive oil, for example — can help improve your cholesterol profile.

Quick Take

High cholesterol is considered a major risk factor for heart disease, the nation's No. 1 killer. **The National Institutes of Health advises the following:**

Total cholesterol < 200

LDL ("bad" cholesterol) < 100

HDL ("good" cholesterol) > 40

Triglycerides < 150

HDL ("good") cholesterol. Learn more about how reaching your target heart rate can help your heart.

Aim for a healthy weight. If you are overweight, losing weight may help improve your cholesterol numbers too. Even a 5-to-10-pound reduction can make a difference.

Quit smoking. You may raise your "good" cholesterol by about 5 percent. Watch out for secondhand smoke as well.

TopHealth takeaway: High cholesterol may be scary, but there's a good chance that you can lower it into a healthier range. Start by making better food choices, moving more, and working with your doctor or health care provider.

Eat right. Limit saturated fat and cut out trans fats. Focus on eating a plant-based diet. Choose lean proteins and whole grains, and control portions.

Move more. Exercise not only helps you maintain a healthy weight, but can also raise your

"Adam and Eve ate the first vitamins, including the package." ~ E.R. Squibb

Doctor's Dictionary

Gastritis

Gastritis — inflammation or irritation of the stomach lining — has many causes, including infection, injury, radiation, certain medications and immune disorders. A very common form of gastritis involves an infection of *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria, leading to indigestion, pain and discomfort in the upper abdomen (or sometimes no symptoms). Luckily, *H. pylori* is easy to detect and treat with medication; a proton-pump inhibitor reduces acid and antibiotics can treat the infection.

Update on Supplements

Each year Americans spend billions "supplementing" their diet in hopes of improved health. Popular products include vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids and enzymes. These "natural" substances can have a powerful influence on the body — positive and negative — just like medications. **What to know:**

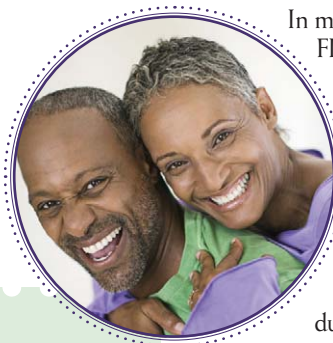
Before a product is marketed, the manufacturer must ensure that it is safe, that claims are supported by evidence and that the label information is accurate.

In most cases, however, companies do not need FDA approval and they do not need to share the results of safety or effectiveness studies. After a product is on the market, the FDA monitors product information and takes action on products deemed unsafe.

Before taking any supplement, review its safety with your health care provider or pharmacist. Some can interfere with medication, cause excess bleeding during surgery or have adverse effects, especially on pregnant or lactating women, people with health problems, children and seniors.

Be careful about products that determine usefulness from a single study. If you do decide to try a well-researched supplement, ask the manufacturer if the product meets the same standards as the ones used in the studies.

Raise your awareness. If you suspect that a supplement has caused an adverse effect, report it to the FDA's MedWatch at 1-800-FDA-1088.



LONGEVITY CORNER

Get Fresh! Recent research in the British Medical Journal reconfirms that good food isn't cheap. When prices go up, many families choose sweetened, fattening processed foods. What's best for your health might cost a bit more. So look for locally grown produce that's in season — it will be fresher and less expensive. Try out new recipes too. This approach will benefit your pocketbook and your health.

— Zorba Paster, MD



Smart moves for your personal wellness program are at www.personalbest.com/extras/sep11tools.