

Health Bits

Good news: New CDC research shows that people with type 2 diabetes are getting healthier and living longer. The top 3 things for everyone who has the condition are blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol. Keep your blood sugar under control by taking your medications, but also by exercising daily and eating right. All 3 count. Blood pressure should be well controlled, preferably with an ACE inhibitor or ARB medicine. Both excel at protecting the kidneys. And what about cholesterol? Even if your diet is spot-on, new guidelines show that nearly everyone with diabetes who can take a statin should. They can help save lives. – *Zorba Paster, MD*



FOR EVERY BODY

Every Step Counts

A well-known fact: Exercise can improve your health, your attitude and your odds against many diseases and disabilities. Yet most Americans aren't getting enough exercise. The most common obstacles – lack of time, pleasure and knowledge about how to exercise.

Solution: Choose activities that you enjoy and that fit well into your everyday life.

- Hike or bike on nearby trails.
- Exercise with free weights (e.g., dumbbells) or pedals while watching TV.
- Try a water exercise class.
- Walk – with a coworker, a pedometer app, your kids, your dog or, if you don't have your own, someone else's dog.

To get started, aim for 30 minutes 5 days a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (try brisk walking).

>> People who stick with exercise for years often report they find the pleasure of physical activity is in *moving* – they love the way exercise makes them feel. Give yourself a few weeks to make it happen. After a while, it becomes second nature to move every day.



TLC for Your Knees

Your knee is the largest joint in your body. Working as a hinge, lever and shock absorber, your knee joint allows you to stand up, walk, kneel, climb, squat and kick.

Consequently, the knees are critical to your mobility – and vulnerable to pain, injury and weakness, especially when we play sports and as we age.



Protect your knees 4 ways:

- 1. One of the most common causes** of painful, weak knees is post-traumatic arthritis that can develop years after a fracture, ligament injury or meniscus damage. *Tip:* Long-term over-exercising often leads to knee injuries from overuse.
- 2. Strengthen the surrounding muscles.** The best way to protect your knees is to power up the front, back, inner and outer thigh muscles – these act like shock absorbers for your knees. They also help to support your knee and keep the kneecap tracking in good alignment. *Tip:* Adopt a sensible routine with the help of a physical therapist or certified exercise trainer.
- 3. Stay slim.** Less weight means less force on your knees during everyday activities. Any reduction in pressure helps lower your risk for arthritis and injuries. *Tip:* Losing a few pounds can reduce the pain and swelling of arthritis.
- 4. Stay limber.** Many knee problems are caused by tight, inflexible leg muscles. Stretching them before your physical activities helps them perform better. (Always warm up with 5 to 10 minutes of exercise before stretching.)



Don't ignore knee pain. When it begins to limit your ability to do normal things, get it checked out before it leads to worse pain or serious, permanent damage.

“Nothing is impossible; the word itself says ‘I’m possible!’” – Audrey Hepburn

To help prevent or relieve painful, swollen varicose veins, don't stand or sit for long periods without interruption.

Avoid crossing your legs while seated. Exercise daily, strengthen your leg muscles and lose extra weight. Avoid long bouts of standing still with knees straightened. When sitting or lying down, elevate your legs above your heart. And ask your health care provider about wearing compression stockings to reduce blood pooling.



Get Smart About Antibiotics



Antibiotics are a precious health resource. But if we use them too often or incorrectly, they become less effective for treating us. Today, most major bacterial infections are becoming resistant to commonly used antibiotics.

Misuse of antibiotics is partly to blame for emerging superbugs. Some bacteria are naturally resistant to certain antibiotics. Others mutate, and become tougher to treat and more dangerous.

Follow these guidelines for using antibiotics:

Don't ask for an antibiotic prescription when you have a viral infection, such as a cold or the flu.

Instead, your health care provider can suggest other – effective – ways to relieve your symptoms, such as a saline nasal spray to help clear congestion.

Bacterial infections that respond to antibiotics include bladder, staph, strep throat, many skin and some ear infections, as well as severe sinus infections.

Use antibiotics correctly. Take **all** of the medicine, even if you (or your child) feel better. A shortened course of antibiotics often wipes out only the most vulnerable bacteria while allowing more resistant bacteria to survive. These resistant bacteria may cause more serious infections in the future.



Give Your Lunch a Makeover

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Whether you bring lunch from home or head to the local food court, fill your plate with health in mind. While some people overindulge at lunch, others eat too little, and forget the importance of well-rounded meals for all-day energy.

Try this: At lunch, ensure half your plate contains fruits and vegetables, a quarter protein and a quarter whole grains. Here are some tips to add superfoods to your midday meals.

Improve sandwiches. Replace high-sodium, processed deli meat and turkey with home-cooked turkey or chicken breast. Choose 100% whole-grain bread. Layer sandwiches with tomato, peppers, eggplant and other vegetables. Use real, unprocessed cheese. Opt for salmon, tuna, nut butter or hummus for a change from meat.

Add more nutritional punch to salads. Choose dark leafy greens (romaine, arugula or spinach) instead of iceberg lettuce. Add protein-rich skinless chicken, fish, a hard-boiled egg or low-fat cheese. Use olive oil-based vinaigrettes and limit servings to 2 tablespoons or less.

Better lunches in the fast-food lane:

- ✓ Pick steamed or sautéed vegetables (not fried) as a main entrée instead of a garnish.
- ✓ Take small portions, except for vegetables.
- ✓ Replace deep-fried fare with roasted or grilled items.
- ✓ Skip salty sauces such as soy, BBQ and teriyaki.
- ✓ Choose brown rice, quinoa (keen-wa) or another whole grain instead of white rice or pasta.
- ✓ Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.



August is Immunization Awareness Month.

Q: Do I need a flu shot?

A: The answer for most people is “yes.” The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for nearly everyone 6 months or older. Influenza vaccines help give protection against the 3 or 4 viruses expected to be most prevalent in the coming season. These viruses can make even healthy people very sick and lead to thousands of hospitalizations and deaths every year.

A few people cannot get the flu shot. Talk to your health care provider if you have a history of allergic reactions to the vaccine components, have had the paralytic illness Guillain-Barre syndrome, or you are moderately or severely ill. The vaccine is not approved for children less than 6 months old.

For the rest of us, the best time for vaccination against seasonal flu is autumn. Your protection starts in 1 to 2 weeks and generally lasts at least 6 to 8 months. – Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/Aug14tools.

Next Month: Boost Your HDL