Get a MOVE ON
Quit sitting your life away.

Living long and well means staying active.

With 206 bones and more than 600 muscles, our bodies are made to move. Of course, modern trends and technology have led to sedentary lifestyles. We now spend the majority of our waking time sitting in a constricted posture that prevents our bodies from functioning well.

How serious is too much sitting? It’s now considered a health risk leading to several diseases, including heart, type 2 diabetes, obesity, arthritis and some cancers — even when we meet the minimum exercise guidelines.

Begin to actively avoid sitting. Think of it as part of your physical fitness goals for health protection. In addition to getting 150 minutes weekly of moderate-intensity exercise (such as brisk walking), the American College of Sports Medicine recommends you stay active throughout each day. For example:

- **Walk** whenever you can — around your workplace, home and neighborhood.
- **Walk** after meals and during your breaks.
- **Pace** while watching TV or online sporting events.
- **Get up and move** about while talking on the phone or eating lunch.
- **Stand** as you read or use your smartphone.
- **Do more chores.**
- **Explore** standing desks for work (with your employer’s okay) or home.

**Tips:** Schedule several 10-minute action breaks each day; set a timer to remind you to get up and move. When you sit less, you’ll be motivated as you experience less stiffness and more energy.

The Flu and You – Personal Precautions

We are approaching the peak of influenza (flu) season, typically in late November through March. Millions of Americans get sick every year from flu bugs that are life-threatening for some.

A little knowledge goes a long way toward prevention. Here are answers to common questions:

- **Mobile devices make it easy to take work to bed.** It’s hard to resist blogging and logging in a few extra hours of work while under the covers. But it can disrupt healthy sleep patterns. And it’s not ergonomic — a few days of this and you may invite neck ache and back strain. Try to complete your work before bedtime and get to sleep.

- **Many things can irritate your throat,** but it’s important to know if the culprit is *streptococcal bacteria* *(group A strep)*. It can cause serious infection and requires prompt medical care. Strep throat is painful, usually starts quickly and involves fever, swelling in the back of the throat, pain when swallowing and sore or swollen lymph nodes in the neck. If you have these symptoms, call your health care provider about getting a strep test. Antibiotics can relieve strep symptoms and prevent serious complications such as rheumatic fever. Children are most susceptible to strep; take steps to avoid contagion.

- **Mental health check: Do you often feel angry, anxious or hopeless?** Having negative emotions now and then is normal, but if they become chronic or overwhelming they can sabotage your physical health, relationships and enjoyment of life. Take a few minutes to complete an anonymous self-assessment at helpyourselfhelpothers.org on National Depression Screening Day on October 5.

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UNDERSTANDING
Metabolic Syndrome

Metabolic syndrome occurs when you develop 3 or more of the following conditions — high blood pressure, high blood sugar, high triglycerides, low HDL (good) cholesterol and abdominal obesity. This combination raises your risk of type 2 diabetes, heart attack and stroke.

People with metabolic syndrome are often overweight or obese. Surveys suggest a third of adults and up to 30% of obese children and adolescents in the U.S. may have this cluster of conditions.

The best ways to treat metabolic syndrome also help prevent it:

- **Watch your belly fat.** Abdominal obesity is a waist circumference of 40-plus inches in men and 35-plus inches in women.
- **Lose excess weight** to help bring your blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol levels into healthier ranges.
- **Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise weekly.** Being physically active every day can help control weight and improve your heart and blood vessel functions.
- **Quit smoking, limit alcohol and sleep at least 7 to 9 hours a night** to significantly help your cardiovascular system.
- **Work with your health care provider** to achieve changes and regularly monitor your symptoms.

Making these changes takes work, but it’s worth it.

Breast Cancer

The causes of breast cancer are not fully known, so the risk factors for it can be puzzling. For example, a woman’s risk for breast cancer increases significantly as she ages but young women can also develop it.

With ongoing research, several factors have been linked to an increased risk of breast cancer.

Check the factors below that apply to you. The degree of risk with some factors can be quite small. And having 1 or 2 risks, or even many, does not mean you will get breast cancer.

**FACTORS THAT CAN’T BE CHANGED:**
- Family history of breast, ovarian or prostate cancer.
- Personal history of breast cancer.
- Ashkenazi Jewish heritage.
- Inherited BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation.
- Hyperplasia or lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS).
- Periods before age 12.
- Radiation therapy to chest at a young age.
- High breast density on a mammogram.

**FACTORS THAT CAN BE CHANGED:**
- More than 1 alcoholic drink a day.
- Overweight, especially after menopause.
- Lack of regular exercise.
- Not giving birth or having a first child after age 35.
- Use of birth control pills.
- Postmenopausal estrogen therapy.
- Postmenopausal hormone replacement therapy (containing estrogen plus progesterin).

2-Step Self-Defense:

1. **Learn about your risks and any factors you can help control.** For example, leading a healthy lifestyle, such as maintaining a proper weight and avoiding alcohol, may help protect you.

2. **Establish a screening plan with your health care provider.** For example, more screening tests might be useful if you’re in a high-risk group based on gene mutations or if you have a strong family history.

Who Needs the Shingles Vaccine?

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

The CDC generally advises the shingles vaccine for adults age 60 or older. It’s designed to prevent shingles — a painful rash caused by herpes zoster, the same virus that causes chickenpox.

**If you have had chickenpox in the past,** you are at risk for developing shingles at a later date. The rash may sometimes lead to a persistent and painful condition called post-herpetic neuralgia. The vaccine helps prevent this.

**Even people who have had shingles should get vaccinated to avoid having it again,** according to the CDC. Some people may develop shingles despite the immunization but usually they have a shorter and milder illness.

**Side effects?** The live shingles vaccine is usually given once and may produce redness, swelling and pain at the injection site as well as headache. Some people get a chickenpox-like rash after receiving the shingles vaccine.

**The vaccine is not recommended** for people with allergies to gelatin or neomycin; those with a weak immune system; or patients taking treatments that suppress the immune system. Women who could become pregnant and people with certain cancers should not receive the vaccine. Check your health care plan as the vaccine cost may not be covered.

Vaccines are the tugboats of preventive health.

— William Foege, MD
How Not to Go on a Diet

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Before you start the latest fad diet, consider this: “Diets don’t work, but lifestyle changes do.” Most people who go on a diet eventually go off it, which means the plan was not sustainable. Repeated dieting also may lead to the yo-yo effect of weight going up and down, making it harder to reach your ultimate healthy weight.

It’s time for a new approach. By incorporating healthy lifestyle changes that include eating nutritiously, getting more exercise and reducing stress, you can slowly improve your overall health with no fads or gimmicks.

Try these 5 steps:

[1] Think beyond a number on the scale. Make weight loss a bonus, not the sole objective. Your goal may be to lower your cholesterol levels or feel more energetic.

[2] Identify your obstacles. Do you eat when you’re stressed? Do you use food as a reward after exercise? Track what you eat and how you feel at the time. Look for patterns.

[3] Try making 1 change per week and stick to it; then add another. For example, swap soft drinks for water 1 week, and add an extra serving of vegetables the next.


[5] Don’t go it alone. Dietitians, psychologists and trainers can help you make a plan you can use for life. If they promise a quick fix, seek a different practitioner.

A lifelong eating plan always beats a fad diet.
The best eating plan is one you can lose weight with and enjoy the rest of your life.

TIP of the MONTH

Mindful Eating

If you’re eating for reasons other than hunger, it’s time to reset your habits. Mindful eating is a technique that dietitians and psychologists use to help you curb eating when you’re sad or stressed. It involves paying attention to your food choices, accepting your body and embracing food as nourishment for it.

CINNAMON OATMEAL RAISIN MUFFINS

2 ripe medium bananas, mashed
½ cup plain Greek yogurt (2% fat)
½ cup brown sugar
1 tsp ground cinnamon
3 tbsp light-tasting olive oil
1 egg
1 cup whole-grain barley flour
½ cup rolled oats
2 tbsp ground flax seeds
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
¼ cup raisins

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners. 2. In a large bowl, combine bananas, yogurt, brown sugar, cinnamon, oil and egg. Stir to combine. 3. To the same bowl, add flour, oats, flax seeds, baking powder, baking soda and raisins. Stir to combine. 4. Spoon batter into prepared muffin tin. 5. Bake for 20-22 minutes or until a tester inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool on a rack before serving.

Makes 12 muffins. Per muffin:
132 calories | 4g protein | 5g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 3g mono fat | 1g poly fat
22g carbohydrate | 10g sugar | 3g fiber | 102mg sodium
Expert Advice

Q: Wearable medical alert systems?

A: If you were to fall or have a medical emergency when you’re alone, a medical alert system could call for help. The idea appeals to a growing number of Americans – those living alone, afraid of falling or with chronic health conditions – who are buying the systems.

Options include:

The ABCs of ATMs

Despite efforts to keep your bank cards safe, ATMs remain prime spots for thieves to capture your credit and debit card information. Learn the ABCs of ATM safety:

A: Always check ATMs and gas pumps for skimming devices before using your card. Look for tampering. Examples include sticky residue or evidence of adhesive, damaged or crooked pieces on the machine, loose parts, resistance when using the keypad, or a card reader that seems to be sticking out farther than normal.

B: Be aware of your surroundings. Don’t use an ATM late at night by yourself or in a desolate area.

C: Carry your ATM card in a safe place such as a wallet or purse and keep your PIN a secret.

D: Don’t count your cash or visually display money after using the ATM.

E: Enter your PIN only when you can shield it with your hand or body so that no one can view it as you enter it.

F: Finally, report any unusual activity on your account immediately.

The Flu and You

Continued from page 1.

What is the flu? Influenza A and B viruses produce upper respiratory illness responsible for seasonal flu epidemics each year. Different types and subtypes of influenza circulate and cause illness during flu season.

How is the flu spread? Flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. If you’re nearby, these droplets can land in your mouth or nose.

How do I know I have the flu? Typical signs include coughing, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, chills, headache, unusual fatigue and sometimes body aches or fever.

How long is the flu contagious? Your symptoms may begin an average of 2 days after you are exposed to the virus. If you are healthy, you can infect others beginning 1 day before your symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

How serious is the flu? It can make some people very ill even without complications. It can sometimes cause complications such as pneumonia, bronchitis, ear or sinus infections and dehydration. It can also worsen any chronic medical conditions, especially congestive heart failure, asthma and diabetes.

How can I avoid the flu? An annual flu vaccination is the best prevention. It is highly effective for the overall population when most circulating flu viruses closely match the vaccine; it does not protect against all influenza viruses. The vaccine cannot give you the flu.

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