



POWERED BY EMI HEALTH AND WebMD

“Life Is a Journey. Have Some Fun.”

Teaching Kids to Enjoy Exercise

Spring is a great time for kids to enjoy physical activity, especially outdoors. Growing up well and fit, children and teens (ages six to 17) need to get regular moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity preferably daily, as recommended by the American Heart Association and the CDC.

Most beneficial are daily aerobic activities and sports that strengthen bones and muscles and make hearts beat faster. Options include regular jogging and sports that involve running, jumping or swimming — at least three days weekly.

Benefits for kids who regularly pursue fitness exercise include:

- A healthy weight.
- Strong heart, bones and muscles.
- Better, healthier brains.
- Good academic performance.
- Positive mental health, confidence and self-esteem.
- Less stress, anxiety and depression.

To encourage kids to exercise:

- Be a role model and focus on fun.
- Make activity social; take long walks together.
- Use competition as a motivator.
- Include kids in household activities.
- Use exercise as transportation; walk or ride bikes.
- Provide gifts that promote physical activity.
- Encourage intramural sports.
- Keep a variety of games and sports equipment on hand.
- Support your school district’s physical education program.

Limit time spent in sedentary activities, such as watching TV, using smartphones, internet use and playing video games.



Summer is coming — a super time to get fit with the kids. Schedule a time each day for an outdoor activity together. Hike a local nature trail or ride a bicycle path. Provide toys that encourage physical activity, such as balls, kites, skateboards and jump ropes. To learn more, search for **25 Ways to Get Moving at Home** at heart.org.



Volume 42 • Number 4 • April 2022

BESTbits



■ **National Alcohol Screening Day is April 7.** This program raises awareness about the harmful effects of alcohol abuse and alcohol dependency. The program offers anonymous screenings and confidential opportunities for those with addiction to seek help. Screening centers will be at colleges, military installations, designated businesses, selected agencies and alcoholscreening.org.



■ **April is National Minority Health Month** — a time to raise awareness of health disparities among ethnic minority populations and provide support through education and early detection and control of diseases. Although life expectancy and infant mortality have improved for most Americans, some minorities are disproportionately burdened with disability, preventable disease and death compared to non-minorities, according to the CDC. Learn more at nimhd.nih.gov/programs/edu-training/nmhm and cdc.gov/minorityhealth.



■ **Properly disposing of your unused prescription drugs prevents their misuse by others.** The National Survey on Drug Use and Health has shown that millions of Americans misuse prescription pain relievers, stimulants, sedatives and tranquilizers, often leading to drug overdose and death. Ready to toss those unused drugs? Dispose of them on **April 27, National Prescription Drug Take Back Day**. To find a year-round safe medication return program near you, visit takebackday.dea.gov.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date pandemic information visit coronavirus.gov.

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue’s printable download, **Health Impact of Nasal Allergies**, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V4tools.

“You learn to cook so that you don’t have to be a slave to recipes. You get what’s in season and you know what to do with it.”

— Julia Child



TIP of the MONTH

Eat to Your Heart’s Content

The American Heart Association recently released a new Scientific Statement with dietary guidance to help Americans improve their cardiovascular (heart) health.

The ten tips for heart health include eating more vegetables, fruit and whole grains; choosing plant-based proteins and fish but less meat; limiting ultra-processed foods, added sugars and salty foods; cutting back on alcohol, and choosing oils rather than butter, lard, shortening or stick margarine.



eating smart

Defining Diet Culture

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

If you’ve ever felt guilty about enjoying dessert or worked out to burn off a heavy meal, you’ve been affected by diet culture. Defined as “the belief that body size is more important than physical, psychological and general well-being,” diet culture convinces you that rigid control of your diet is somehow normal, and that only skinny bodies are acceptable.

From advertisements for “guilt-free ice cream” to diet apps that count calories, and extremely thin influencers detailing “what I eat in a day,” diet culture is pervasive and highly influential. Sadly, diet culture contributes to discriminatory weight bias and fat phobia, which can lead to poorer treatment of people in larger bodies.

The truth? What seems like aspirational diet messaging has a serious downside, which can lead to an unhealthy relationship with food. Accepting diet culture’s promise that “skinny” is best and that we should only “eat clean” foods can lead to:

- Poor self-esteem, negative self-talk and poor mental health.
- Eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa.
- Orthorexia, an obsession with “clean” eating.
- Nutrient deficiencies.
- Weight bias.

While avoiding diet culture in our society is sadly impossible, you can minimize the impact on your life. Here’s how:

Skip websites or social media accounts that make you feel bad about yourself. Instead, fill your social media feed with influencers who embrace all body types, while supporting nutritious eating and joyous physical activity.

Treat yourself kindly. Skip fad diets, avoid detoxes and quit labeling foods as good or bad.

Remember that food is about nourishment but is also about celebration, family and enjoyment. If you need help finding joy in food, find health care providers who are trained in **body neutrality** or **intuitive eating**. They can help you learn to enjoy food and fitness while accepting your body.



Mediterranean Chickpea Salad

EASY recipe

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, drained and rinsed | ½ cup crumbled feta cheese |
| 1 large tomato, diced | 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil |
| 1 medium cucumber, diced | 3 tbsp lemon juice |
| 1 yellow pepper, seeded and diced | 1 tsp dried oregano |
| 2 tbsp chopped kalamata olives | Pinch each salt and pepper |
| ¼ cup red onion, diced | ½ cup fresh chopped parsley, optional |

In a large serving bowl, mix chickpeas, tomato, cucumber, yellow pepper, olives, onion and feta cheese. In a small jar or container with lid, combine olive oil, lemon juice, oregano, salt and pepper. **Shake** well, and pour dressing over salad. **Add** parsley if using. **Toss** to combine, and enjoy.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 300 calories | 11g protein | 17g total fat | 4g saturated fat | 8g mono fat | 5g poly fat | 23g carbohydrate | 2g sugar | 6g fiber | 542mg sodium

“Perseverance is failing 19 times and succeeding the 20th.”

— Julie Andrews



Autism Awareness Month promotes understanding of autism.

This complex developmental condition, which occurs in one in 54 U.S. children, impacts the ability to interact and communicate. But how it affects people can vary across a wide spectrum. Autism Awareness Month emphasizes the need for more acceptance of autistic individuals throughout their lives — and more awareness and celebration of their differences. Learn more at aane.org.

work&life

Dealing with Loneliness

It's normal to feel lonely sometimes, but ongoing loneliness is different. It's the distressing feeling of being separated from others that's often triggered by having few people to interact with regularly. Many things can cause loneliness: moving to a new city, a relationship breakup, the death of a close friend or relative, isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, or even long-term telecommuting.

Don't ignore constant loneliness. It raises the risk for depression, anxiety, heart disease and stroke, according to the CDC. That's why it's important to recognize how loneliness impacts your life, and take positive action to cope and connect.

Try these strategies for overcoming loneliness:

- **Proactively find ways to connect with others.** Contact local organizations that need volunteers.
- **Consider adopting a pet.** Petting or hugging an animal can be very therapeutic and make you feel more connected. Plus, you're giving your furry friend a loving home.
- **Exercise to boost mood and help you connect.** Reach out to neighbors or community groups to find walking or jogging partners.
- **Open up to friends and family.** Share your feelings of loneliness with those important to you, even if they are in other locations. Let them know how they can help with communication or visits.
- **If feelings of loneliness persist, don't hesitate to get help.** Consider making connections through a support group. And talk to your health care provider about counseling options, including therapy via telemedicine.



Build Strong Work Relationships

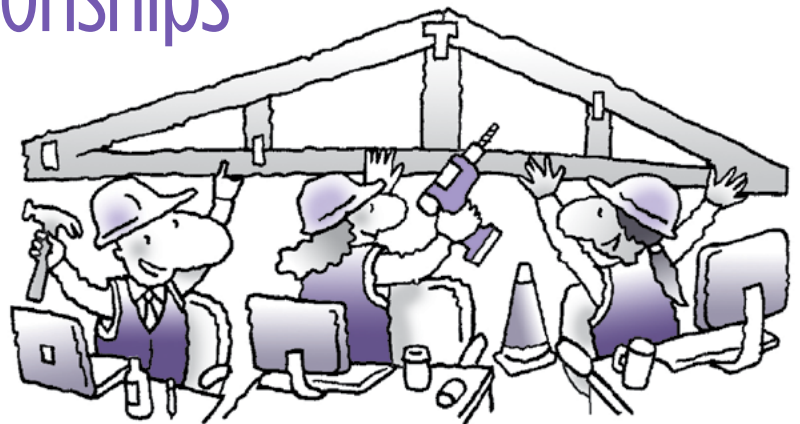
Make work productive and enjoyable.

What's the value in getting along with our coworkers?

The more confident we feel with our coworkers, the more assured we can feel voicing opinions and accepting new ideas. This level of teamwork can help us support work guidelines and frequent change and remain innovative.

Feeling positive and effective at work leads to a happier experience on the job, especially if facing regular changes within your organization. A good relationship with your boss (or bosses) is key to staying motivated and productive. Communicate well and promptly with your boss and watch for ways to improve your job.

Most managers are on the lookout for and rewarding employees who take initiative on the job. Enthusiasm for your work can show your value to the company. One way is to observe, become aware of and suggest new ideas when suitable.



7 Ways to Maintain Strong Working Relations

To sustain good work relationships with your coworkers, manager, customers and other stakeholders:

1. Communicate well and often with your coworkers.
2. Be a good listener.
3. Be consistent and dependable.
4. Know your workplace guidelines.
5. Deliver quality work on time.
6. Remain positive in interactions.
7. Avoid gossip.

Good friends at work? A Gallup survey found that employees who have a best friend at work are seven times more likely to be positively engaged in their jobs.

“A hug is like a boomerang — you get it back right away.”

— Bil Keane



Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) isn't life-threatening, but it can affect your quality of life. IBS symptoms include abdominal pain, bloating, mucus in stools, constipation and/or diarrhea. It's a chronic disorder but it is treatable. April is **Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) Awareness Month**, a good time to talk to your health care provider about managing IBS symptoms and how you can find relief. Treatment can include diet changes, medication, probiotics, counseling and reducing stress. Work with your provider to find an individualized treatment to control or eliminate your IBS symptoms. Learn more at aboutibs.org.

body&mind

Q: What is languishing?

A: **Between thriving and depression lies languishing**, a condition of aimless stagnation. In this state, people don't have overt symptoms of a mental disorder (disruption in sleep, appetite, energy, memory, etc.), but they lack joy, drive and purpose.

Research suggests that those who are languishing are at risk for developing depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder later. Here are some strategies to prevent and reverse this trend:

- Remove distractions. Focus on one activity at a time.
- Seek a state of mindfulness or flow. Become immersed in the moment and in touch with your experience, rather than ruminating about the past or worrying about the future.
- Keep a journal of small milestones you've reached and try to build toward positive goals.
- Learn a new skill.
- Connect with and help others.

— Eric Endlich, PhD



Understanding Eco-Friendly Labels

Buying cosmetics, household cleaners and other non-food items that are eco-friendly is a good idea. After all, who doesn't want products that are safe for the environment? But labels can be hard to decipher and sometimes downright deceptive.

For example, **natural** on a label doesn't necessarily equate to eco-friendly. In fact, the Federal Trade Commission noted in its Green Guides there's no basis to define or substantiate what's truly natural. So, products may be labeled **natural** without any facts backing up that claim.

Tips for spotting truly eco-friendly labels:

- Although laundry detergents no longer contain polluting softening agents known as phosphates, which promote overgrowth of algae (causing toxins which can endanger people and wildlife), other potentially worrisome chemicals remain in some detergents. Look for **Safer Choice** eco-labels, which signify the EPA found the product's ingredients are safe for the environment.
- When it comes to cosmetics and other personal care products, **made with organic ingredients** on the label indicates at least 70% of the ingredients meet USDA organic standards. And **cruelty-free** means the product was developed without animal testing. **Note:** According to the FDA, "Cosmetic products labeled with organic claims must comply with both USDA regulations for the organic claim and FDA regulations for labeling and safety requirements for cosmetics." Cosmetics made with organic ingredients are not safer than those made with non-organic ingredients, the FDA says.



There will always be obstacles and challenges that stand in your way. Building mental strength will help you develop resilience to those potential hazards so you can continue on your journey to success.

— Amy Morin

Feeling lightheaded, woozy or a little faint is nothing to ignore. If it occurs after starting a prescription medication, there could be a connection. Many drugs (including those prescribed for hypertension, diabetes and depression) can cause lightheadedness. As your body gets used to the medication, the wooziness may go away, or you may need a lower dosage or to change meds. Don't guess. Lightheadedness can cause falls and accidents. Contact your pharmacist and health care provider immediately for medication advice.

body&mind

Q: Need a knee replacement?

A: **Arthritis can cause the loss of knee cartilage.** This may result in pain, stiffness and decreased joint motion. When you have tried most treatments and still have disabling pain, your health care provider may recommend physical therapy or suggest knee replacement. The surgery involves replacing parts of your knee joint with artificial parts.

An evaluation to see if you are a surgical candidate usually involves determining the amount of disability you have from arthritis.

Commonly asked questions may include:

- Does severe knee pain limit your everyday activities?
- Do you have problems walking, climbing stairs and getting in and out of chairs?
- Do you have severe knee pain even at rest?
- Does it interfere with your sleep?
- Is your knee always swollen?
- Does your knee bow in or out?
- Are you less able to fully straighten your knee?

If surgery is under consideration, ask about the benefits and risks of knee replacement.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD



Personal Trainers 101

A personal trainer can help you tone up, improve stamina and reach fitness goals. But he or she needs to develop a program that's best for *you*. Although friends and your health care provider may recommend a personal trainer, you'll need to do your homework.

Ask these questions:

Does a personal trainer have up-to-date certification recognized by: the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, American College of Sports Medicine, the National Strength and Conditioning Association, or National Academy of Sports Medicine?

Talk to your potential personal trainers on the phone. Find out how much experience they have and what their educational background is. Get several references.

What's the trainer's availability? Does their schedule fit the times you have for workouts?

Do you have to work out at a specific gym or outdoor track? Or does the personal trainer come to your home with equipment?

How much does the trainer charge? Is there a cancellation policy if you have to change a workout day? And if hourly solo sessions don't fit your budget, does the trainer offer semi-private sessions with other clients or a discount for paying for several sessions at once?

If the trainer seems a good fit, meet in person before you commit. Are they encouraging and friendly or more like a drill sergeant? It makes sense to see if the trainer's style and personality are a good fit for you.

Tip: If your trainer starts to give you unsolicited medical or nutrition advice, remember that's not their area of expertise. Make sure you turn to the right professional, such as your health care provider or dietitian, for those needs.



By Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, AFC

Long-term care (LTC) refers to care that you need if you can no longer perform everyday tasks (activities of daily living — bathing, dressing, transferring to or from a bed, a chair or wheelchair, eating, continence and toileting) due to a chronic illness, injury, disability, or aging.

Long-term care is for chronic medical conditions, where care may be needed for the rest of your life. Long-term care insurance is one way of paying for these expenses. Most policies will cover care provided in your home, a nursing home or an assisted living facility.

Because long-term care can be expensive, depending on the type of care you need, it is critical to purchase LTC insurance before you need the policy; many people buy policies in their mid-50s and mid-60s. And because you have to pay for services out of pocket for a certain amount of time, it is also essential to have a substantial emergency fund or savings.

Several demographic factors impact the cost of long-term policies: gender, age, overall health and marital status. You can buy LTC policies from insurance companies or independent agents. Your employer may also offer them. Compare prices among at least three different sources. **Tip:** If you itemize deductions, federal and some states allow taxpayers to deduct all or some of long-term care premiums as medical expenses.

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. 

Deter Driving Distractions

More than 3,100 lives were lost in 2019 in the U.S. due to distracted driving, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Distracted driving is anything that takes your attention away from driving — whether it be your cell phone, conversation, eating or using navigation.

Avoid distractions:

- Turn off or silence your cell phone and never text while driving. If you must use your phone for any reason, pull over to a safe place first.
- Adjust your radio, music streaming and temperature controls before you start to drive.
- Avoid eating, drinking or smoking while driving.
- Transport your pets in pet carriers or secure them in the rear of the car.
- Pull over if you need something from another part of your car.
- Don't drive when you're upset, overexcited, sick, tired or have other strong emotions or physical symptoms.
- Secure items in the car — including groceries — so they do not roll over or topple while driving.
- Don't sightsee while driving. If you want to look around, pull over safely.



SAFETY CORNER

April Showers Bring Hydroplaning

Hydroplaning occurs when a vehicle starts sliding uncontrollably due to the tires encountering more water than the treads can displace. It can be prevented or minimized with these five tips:

1. Make sure your tires are properly inflated, have enough tread and are rotated often.
2. Drive slower or pull over safely if you find yourself driving in heavy rain.
3. Stay away from puddles and outer lanes where water accumulates.
4. Avoid hard braking and quick turns while driving in excess water.
5. Drive in tire tracks left by vehicles in front.



UPDATE on Cancer

By Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus

Fifty years ago, the National Cancer Act of 1971 was the start of the U.S. commitment to learning as much as possible about cancer by creating a world-class research network — the National Cancer Institute and its Cancer Centers Program. This step expanded the National Clinical Trials Network, supporting the ability to collect and store comprehensive patient data, leading to many breakthroughs in cancer research and treatment.

Advances in cancer care technology are broad and have had a major impact in the field of cancer identity and treatment, as well as prevention. But more than 100 different forms of cancer have been identified in recent decades — and cases are increasing globally, creating a major burden on society. Fortunately, we now have:

- Stronger diagnostic imaging tools.
- Technology to help manage the complexity and cost of oncology (the study of tumors).
- Better health data to help determine the most effective treatments for individual forms of cancer.
- Better survival rates.
- Known prevention practices.

Cancer cases diagnosed in the U.S. reached an estimated 1.9 million in 2021 — a fairly equal number of cases between men and women — with more than 600,000 cancer deaths. The most common cancer sites are colon, lung, breast and prostate.

Cancer in young people? About 89,000 Americans ages 15 to 39 are diagnosed with cancer each year in the U.S. Some of the most common forms in this age group are:

- Breast cancer.
- Lymphomas (non-Hodgkin and Hodgkin).
- Melanoma.
- Sarcomas (cancers of connective tissues, such as muscles and bones).
- Cancers of the female genital tract (cervix and ovary).
- Thyroid cancer.
- Testicular cancer.
- Colorectal cancer.
- Brain and spinal cord tumors.

Today's major risk factors for developing cancer include: a family history of cancer, smoking, obesity, sedentary lifestyle and poor diet.



Your basic lifestyle choices can do a lot to help prevent cancer.

Experts say that we can control our individual risk with lifestyle modifications, such as eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking, restricting alcohol intake, engaging in regular physical activity and getting routine health care checkups.

Cancer screening tests are critical. They can help detect malignancies in their earliest stages, but you should always be alert for symptoms that may indicate cancer, including:

- A change in bowel or bladder habits.
- A sore that does not heal.
- Unusual bleeding or discharge.
- A thickening or lump in the breast or elsewhere.
- Indigestion (frequent) or difficulty in swallowing.
- An obvious change in a wart or mole.
- A nagging cough or hoarseness.

Check with your health care provider if you have any of these symptoms.

Cancer and the impact of COVID-19: The American Cancer Society has anticipated that decreased resources and access to care due to the pandemic will make it more difficult for cancer diagnosis and treatment, resulting in fewer identified cases, higher mortality and decreased survival in the future.

April

Fill-in-the-Blank Puzzle

Find out how well you know the topics covered in this issue of the newsletter.

- 1 _____ is the belief that body size is more important than physical, psychological and general well-being.
- 2 _____ raises the risk for depression, anxiety, heart disease and stroke, according to the CDC.
- 3 The word _____ on a label doesn't necessarily mean the product is eco-friendly.
- 4 _____ made with organic ingredients are not safer than those made with non-organic ingredients.
- 5 Arthritis can cause the loss of knee _____, which may result in pain, stiffness and decreased joint motion.
- 6 Many drugs (including those prescribed for hypertension, diabetes and depression) can cause _____.
- 7 _____ occurs when a vehicle starts sliding uncontrollably due to the tires encountering more water than the treads can displace.
- 8 Experts say that we can control our individual risk for _____ with lifestyle modifications.



You'll find the answers at personalbest.com/extras/Apr2022puzzle.pdf.

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Health Impact of Nasal Allergies**, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V4tools.

Dr. Zorba's corner

Blue Light and Insomnia

Insomnia is a common problem. Recent research shows that the blue light from screens might be a factor. Many studies show that screen use within 30 minutes of going to sleep is an insomnia risk. There are blue light filtering glasses that might work, if you need to hit that screen late at night. But the research is preliminary. And my opinion is it's not blue light that's keeping you from getting shuteye; rather, mental interaction with the screen may be stimulating you too much. My recommendation is to nix it and go for reading the old-fashioned way with a paper book or magazine before you nod off. **Tip:** Search online for e-readers with no blue light.

— Zorba Paster, MD

Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

Email: PBeditor@ebix.com • Website: personalbest.com

Executive Editor: Susan Cottman

Advisers: Patricia C. Buchsel, RN, MSN, FAAN; Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, AFC, MBA, MS; Eric Endlich, PhD; Mary P. Hollins, MS, JD, CSHM; Kenneth Holtyn, MS; Reed Humphrey, PhD; Gary B. Kushner, SPHR, CBP; Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus; Zorba Paster, MD; Charles Stuart Platkin, PhD; Cara Rosenbloom, RD; Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP; Margaret Spencer, MD

Editor: Aimie Miller

The content herein is in no way intended to serve as a substitute for professional advice. Sources available on request. © 2022 Ebix Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction in any form of any part of this publication is a violation of federal copyright law and is strictly prohibited. Hope Health® is a registered trademark of Ebix, LLC.

1 Ebix Way, Johns Creek, GA 30097

Phone: 800-871-9525 • Fax: 205-437-3084