

take charge

Baby Your Feet



Healthy feet are key to staying active, fit and free of chronic, painful foot problems that slow you down. These basic self-care tips are sure to help you stay in step for the miles ahead.

Only wear shoes that fit well and allow your feet to function normally. The right shoes will provide support and comfort for your feet, legs and back. Well-fitted shoes can help prevent blisters, bunions and chronic pain in the heel, arch and forefoot.

>> Bad news shoes: High heels can cause foot and leg problems by cramping the toes and applying added pressure to the ball of the foot. Flip flops lack stability, arch support and cushioning.

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Vitamins for Everyone

Vitamins are vital to healthy cells as well as the normal growth and function of our bodies.

How do you know if your diet is supplying enough of the right stuff? Why not just rely on vitamin supplements? Most health authorities recommend getting vitamins from food rather than supplements, with some exceptions, including pregnant women, seniors or others at risk for specific shortages.

So what's the best nutritional strategy for promoting optimal health? Eat balanced meals with choices from all the food groups. Are you concerned you aren't getting enough of some nutrients? Your health care provider can help you make changes to meet your needs.

To learn more, visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at www.eatright.org and search for "vitamins." Following the recommendations in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans can help you get the vitamins you need. Go to www.choosemyplate.com to create your personalized eating plan.

best bits

■ **Family mealtime can encourage healthful eating for everyone at the table.** Plan to eat dinner or breakfast as a family at least 4 to 5 times a week. Turn off the TV, phones and other electronic devices and enjoy mealtime conversation. Invite kids to help with meal planning. For more tips, visit Kids Eat Right at www.eatright.org/kids/.

■ **To help prevent foodborne illness,** lower the spread of bacteria during food preparation at home. Practice frequent, thorough hand washing; separate animal-based foods from produce and ready-to-eat foods; use a food thermometer to ensure food is properly cooked; and refrigerate food quickly.

■ **Deal with medications before your hospital stay:** (1) With your health care providers, review your complete medication list, including prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, all herbal and dietary supplements, topical lotions and patches. (2) Discuss allergies and use of alcohol, tobacco and all other drugs. (3) Have a personal advocate track your medicines while you're hospitalized. (4) Before leaving the hospital, learn all you can about any new medicines you're given.

“ Good health is not something we can buy. However, it can be an extremely valuable savings account. — Anne Wilson Schaefer ”

This Edition

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Standing Fit at Work

Standing all day in 1 place is part of the job for many workers. It can cause fatigue, swollen feet and legs, back pain and stiffness – the same problems that also plague sit-down workers. To feel better at work:

- **Change positions frequently.** Use breaks to walk, stretch and stand in different positions. Movement is key to easing the strain of staying stationary on your feet.
- **Build fitness.** Fit in 2 to 3 strength training sessions per week to increase your stamina.
- **Stretch.** Throughout your workday stretch your shoulders, back, hips, legs and feet. If your job requires a lot of repeated actions or positions, stretch yourself the opposite way.
- **Watch your posture.** Maintaining the natural curves of your spine (a bit like an S from the side) reduces fatigue and muscle strain.

Standing Posture Checklist

- Place your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Don't over-straighten your knees.
- Keep your head upright and chin slightly elevated.
- Keep shoulders down and back to avoid hunching.

More comfort solutions:

Use anti-fatigue mats and footrests (a step stool or an overturned trash can). Relax in a warm bath. Massage your feet, toes and legs regularly.

Online Health Self-Assessments



Websites are popular sources of health news and information. Online research can be helpful when your sources are reliable and current.

You'll also find free risk assessments for almost any condition – diabetes, heart, stroke, cancer and arthritis, to name a few. How can you tell if an online medical self-diagnosis is scientifically valid, worthwhile and confidential? Here are some guidelines:

>> **CONNECT to the leading health authorities.** When searching for assessments for specific conditions, start with national health organizations entrusted with public education. Examples: CDC, National Institutes of Health, American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association and American Medical Association.

>> **STUDY the site's privacy policy.** Make sure it adequately guards your personal information used in the questionnaire before you submit it.

>> **AVOID sites providing information that is:** (1) Not current. Ideally, information has been posted within the past 12 to 18 months. (2) Not supported by scientific research. Look for recent clinical studies, not anecdotal experience. (3) Not useful. The questionnaire is overly complicated or too elementary. (4) Making claims that are too good to be true.

>> **LEARN the purpose of the site.** Be sure its mission is to inform, not to sell products or services. Review the website's "About Us" page to get answers.

Important: Websites are no substitute for personalized, professional medical care.

Sugar: What You Need to Know

Sugar – kids love it, dentists hate it and Americans consume too much of it – more than 130 pounds per person each year.



Sugar may be a key factor in metabolic syndrome, a condition which is believed to increase the risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and maybe even cancer.

So how much is OK to eat? The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons of added sugar for women each day, and 9 teaspoons for men. Note: Four grams equals 1 teaspoon of sugar. Sugar is listed in grams on the nutrition facts label.

In the meantime, reduce your sugar intake 3 ways:

1. Instead of soft drinks, fruit juice, energy drinks and other high-sugar beverages, drink water or sparkling water. **Note:** Soft drinks are the leading source of sugar in the American diet. A 12-ounce soft drink has 10 teaspoons of added sugar.
2. Eat mostly whole foods, such as produce.
3. Enjoy fruit for dessert and save baked goods and other sweet foods for special occasions.



Good to know: Ingredients in processed foods are listed in order of importance. If sugar is among the top 5, check the calories and grams per serving. Manufacturers also use honey, maple syrups and corn sweeteners. These may be listed as glucose, dextrose, fructose, maltose or sucrose.

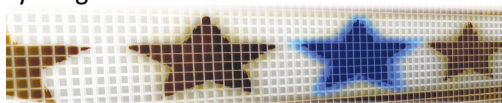
Blueberries are among the most delicious, richest sources of antioxidants you can eat. There are 44 calories and 2 grams of fiber in a half-cup of raw blueberries. You can refrigerate blueberries for several days or freeze them for 3 to 6 months with little loss of nutrient value. Choose plump, firm berries with a slight silvery sheen, in season July through October.



Practice Self-Appreciation

Give yourself a pat on the back. A little self-appreciation can go a long way toward helping you feel more positive and achieve more. Three tips to try:

- ✓ **Review what you've accomplished.** List your best successes at work and in life, such as passing a test, completing a key project, landing a big client, coming up with a great idea, or helping someone else. Remembering what you did well in the past can reconnect you with your self-worth.
- ✓ **Recognize your strengths.** Make a list of the things you do well. If you have trouble thinking of your strengths, ask a friend or coworker to help you list some.
- ✓ **Tune up your self-talk.** Recognize the negative messages running through your mind: *I can't do this. I am not capable and will never get it right.* Work hard to think more positively and send encouraging, appreciative thoughts to yourself: *I know I can do this. This is hard, but I'll figure it out. I never quit.* Sometimes that's all it takes to turn your attitude around and spur you toward your goals.



Stay Cool With No-Cook Meals

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

When the temperature soars outdoors, you may not want to turn on your oven and add heat inside. Keep it cool by opting for a dinner menu that requires no cooking.

Chill out with cool soups. From cold cherry soup to cucumber-based gazpacho, chilled soups are the perfect way to cool down on a hot day. Plus, they help you add more vegetables and fruit to your diet.

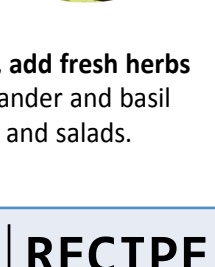
Salads reign supreme. For a simple, refreshing dinner on a hot evening, nothing beats salad – and your options are endless. Stock up on mixed greens, cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, avocados, mushrooms, peppers and fruits such as strawberries and sliced apples. And don't forget protein. Fill your pantry with cans of tuna, salmon, chickpeas and lentils – they're all protein-rich, no-cook salad toppers.

Wrap it up. Pack salad ingredients into a whole-grain wheat or corn tortilla for an easy sandwich. Add low-fat cheese, sodium-reduced turkey breast deli slices or store-bought rotisserie chicken without the skin.

Company coming? No need to turn on the stove. Serve a chilled shrimp ring with some zesty salsa. Or offer guests an elegant cheese tray with whole-grain crackers, assorted nuts and fruit. Vegetables and dip are another no-fuss option.



To add no-calorie, fat-free flavor, add fresh herbs to your meals. Mint, parsley, coriander and basil are perfect for soups, sandwiches and salads.



Summer Blues Salad

EASY | RECIPE

From Personal Best®

- ¼ cup nonfat plain **Greek yogurt**
- 1 oz. crumbled **blue cheese**
- 2 tsp **raspberry vinegar**
- 6 cups baby **spinach**
- 3 cups cut-up rotisserie **chicken** (light and dark, skin removed)
- ½ cup **blueberries**
- 3 tbsp sliced **almonds**

Gently combine yogurt, blue cheese and vinegar; toss with spinach. Place salad on 4 plates; top with chicken, berries and almonds.



Makes 4 servings. Per serving:

195 calories | 11.4g protein | 9.9g total fat | 2.6g sat fat | 3.7g mono fat | .6g poly fat | 127mg cholesterol | 6.7g carbohydrate | 2.7g sugar | 2.4g fiber | 250mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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top safety

Cycling Sense



It's a beautiful day for a bike ride, but before you hop on that bicycle follow these 6 rules of the road to keep safe:

Rule No. 1: Always wear protective eyeglasses and a snug-fitting helmet. You never know when or where an accident can occur. The helmet should cover your forehead and not rock back and forth once the straps are adjusted. Bicycle helmets sold in the U.S. must meet the standards issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Look for the CPSC label.

Rule No. 2: Maintain your bike and check gears and tires before you get on the road.

Rule No. 3: Stay focused on the road and stay aware of traffic around you. Don't use personal electronic devices when you ride.

Rule No. 4: Expect the unexpected. Watch for vehicles pulling out, doors opening and pedestrians.

Rule No. 5: Observe all traffic rules, signs, signals (stop at red lights) and lane markings. Signal before turning.

Rule No. 6: Don't ride at night. If you must, always use reflectors and white lights on the front and rear of your bike. Use reflective clothing for an extra "layer" of protection. Share the road safely by following these rules and enjoy the ride.

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Notice changes in your feet. Don't delay reporting symptoms to your health care provider, such as worsening pain in your arch and heel (**plantar fasciitis**), a large bump at the joint of a big toe (**bunion**) and curling toes (**hammer toes**). All should be reported.

Don't walk barefoot. Footwear helps you avoid foot injuries such as bumps, jams and cuts, which can lead to infections and even insect bites or stings.

Practice foot hygiene. Wash your feet and toenails daily. Use a pumice stone to smooth out callused areas. Trim your toenails straight across, but not too short.

>> For people with diabetes: Professional foot care is critical to avoiding serious foot problems worsened by nerve damage. Always wear shoes to avoid injuries. Make sure your provider routinely checks your feet for injury or infection. Check your feet daily to spot any new sores or areas that are slow to heal.

expert advice

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAFP

Q: How to prepare for surgery?

A: Before surgery, you may have many questions.



First, contact your health plan to determine if you need preauthorization for the procedure.

Be sure you understand the procedure and how it will help you. Find out if you have any nonsurgical options for avoiding the procedure. Ask how long the procedure and recovery take and about any complications that may occur.

Know in advance what type of anesthesia is recommended. Also, ask how many times your surgeon has done the procedure.

Ask your provider well in advance of the surgery what you can do to prepare physically, such as quitting smoking or alcohol, any dietary changes, or medications to avoid.

Arrange to have someone pick you up and drive you home when you are discharged from surgery. You may also need to plan ahead to have help at home.