

HEALTH & WELLNESS

SPECIAL EDITION TO THE MCKENZIE BANNER & DRESDEN ENTERPRISE

NOVEMBER 2016

Exercise Tips for Beginners

The right combination of diet and exercise is one of the keys to a long and healthy life. While many people find adapting to a healthier diet challenging. That challenge often pales in comparison to the intimidation felt when working out for the first time in years.

Beginners can employ the following strategies to make their return to exercise go as smoothly as possible:

- **Gradually build up your exercise tolerance.** When you exercise, your body releases neurotransmitters known as endorphins, which trigger positive feelings in the body. Those positive feelings can be addictive, but it's important that beginners do not go too hard too quickly when beginning a new exercise regimen. Gradually build up your exercise tolerance, ex-

ercising two or three days per week and taking a day off between workouts when you start. As your body becomes more acclimated to exercise, you can start to work out more and with more intensity.

- **Stretch after working out.** Stretching can improve flexibility, and that may decrease your risk of future injury. Muscles contract during a workout, and stretching after workouts can help reset those muscles to their natural position. Include both static stretching and foam rolling in your post-workout stretching routine.

- **Find a routine that works for you.** Many men and women feel they must sign up for a gym membership upon resolving to adopt a more active lifestyle. If the gym is not for you, try to find a routine that still includes both strength training and

cardiovascular exercise. Strength training can make your body more durable, and cardiovascular exercise can reduce your risk for various health problems, including heart disease.

- **Track your progress.** One way to stay motivated is to keep track of your progress. If you're working out but not monitoring your results, you may not feel like you're getting anywhere. Keep a workout diary, tracking both your successes and failures, so you can see what's working and what's not.

Returning to exercise after an extended period of inactivity can be quite the challenge, but it's nothing motivated men and women cannot overcome.





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HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Benefits of Including Yoga In Your Exercise Routine

The almost meteoric rise in popularity of yoga can likely be traced to many factors, including a growing awareness among the general public regarding the impact a healthy lifestyle can have on both short- and long-term health.

"The relaxation techniques incorporated in yoga can lessen chronic pain, such as lower back pain, arthritis, headaches and carpal tunnel syndrome," explained Natalie Nevins, DO, a board-certified osteopathic family physician and certified Kundalini Yoga instructor.

The American Osteopathic Association notes the benefits of yoga extend even further than relieving chronic pain. According to the AOA, yoga can help men, women and even children increase their flexibility as well as help them build stronger, more toned muscles. Additional benefits of yoga in-

clude weight reduction, improved cardiovascular and circulatory health and improved energy and vitality.

But the benefits of yoga extend beyond the physical to the mental. The American Psychological Association notes that several studies have shown that yoga can help strengthen social attachments, reduce stress and relieve anxiety, depression and insomnia. For example, a 2012 study from researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, found that a particular type of yoga that included brief, daily meditation reduced the stress levels of caregivers tasked with caring for people suffering from Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

One of the more attractive aspects of yoga is that it requires little or no financial commitment on the part of the people who practice it. Unlike fitness centers that typically require members

to commit to yearly contracts or even potentially costly month-to-month memberships, many yoga studios do not require long-term commitments, instead asking that customers pay a small amount each time they visit if they are hesitant to commit to memberships. In addition, yoga requires just a mat and some appropriate clothing, ideally clothing that's conducive to flexibility but not so loose that it will prevent you from performing certain poses.

Before including yoga in your exercise regimen, speak with your physician. Once you get the green light, look for a beginner's course, explaining to your instructor that you are just starting out. Many yoga studios offer introductory classes that help men and women acclimate their bodies to yoga and the various poses it entails before moving on to more challenging poses.

Explaining Atrial Fibrillation

In late 2013, the World Health Organization released results from a data analysis that examined atrial fibrillation and its prevalence across the globe. The results were troubling, indicating that 33.5 million people worldwide have the condition.

Atrial fibrillation is the most common type of arrhythmia, which is a problem with the rate or rhythm of the heartbeat. AF occurs when rapid, disorganized electrical signals cause the heart's two upper chambers, known as the atria, to contract very quickly and irregularly.

The heart is not functioning properly when a person has atrial fibrillation. Blood pools in the atria when a person has AF, and the blood is not pumped completely into the heart's two lower chambers. As a result, the heart's upper and lower chambers do not work in conjunction as they do when the heart is fully healthy.

Some people with AF do not feel symptoms and only

learn of their condition after physical examinations. That highlights the importance of scheduling annual physicals for all people, but especially for people with a personal or family history of heart trouble.

According to the American Heart Association, the most common symptom of AF is a quivering or fluttering heartbeat, which is caused by abnormal firing of electrical impulses. Anyone who feels such a symptom or suspects their heartbeat is abnormal should consult a physician **IMMEDIATELY**.

In addition to a quivering or fluttering heartbeat, the AHA notes that people with AF may experience one or more of the following symptoms: General fatigue; Dizziness; Shortness of breath and anxiety; Weakness; Faintness or confusion; Fatigue when exercising; Sweating; or Chest pain or pressure.

The AHA warns that people experiencing chest pain or pressure are having a medical emergency

that requires immediate medical attention. Whether or not symptoms of AF are detected, the condition can still increase a person's risk for serious medical problems, including stroke.

No one is immune to atrial fibrillation. Men are more likely than women to develop AF.

AF is more common in people who have: High blood pressure; Coronary heart disease; Heart failure; Rheumatic heart disease; Structural heart defects; Pericarditis; or Congenital heart defects.

There is no guaranteed way to prevent AF, though certain lifestyle choices can reduce a person's risk for the condition. A heart-healthy diet that's low in cholesterol, saturated fat and trans fat and also includes daily servings of various whole grains, fruits and vegetables can lower a person's risk for AF. Daily physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight and not smoking also can lower a person's risk.

Advantages to Physical Therapy to Relieve Pain

Recent reports indicate more than 1.5 billion people worldwide experience chronic pain. Common complaints include lower back pain, headache, neck pain, or nerve damage.

Pain can impact people in many ways. Chronic pain may result in missed time at work, depression, anger, and an inability to live a full life.

To cope with pain, many people rely on over-the-counter and prescription medications. This reliance on drugs has helped to fuel pain medication addictions that can lead to other drug abuse. Physical therapy is a safer and sometimes more effective method of pain relief.

There is increasing evidence that conservative treatments like physical therapy can be equally effective and cheaper treatment plans for many conditions. Physical therapy can be as effective as surgery for meniscal tears and knee osteoarthritis, rotator cuff tears and spinal stenosis, among



other conditions.

A physical therapist can develop a treatment plan that addresses the specific needs of the patient. Therapists are experts in improving mobility and motion and have studied extensively to that end. Therapists try to address the source of the pain and relieve the pain itself.

Physical therapy may include exercises that stretch the body and improve flexibility. Strengthening exercises will help work on core muscles as well as other

parts of the body to prevent injury down the road.

Therapists may be able to assess posture, gait and other attributes that may be contributing to pain and make suggestions to reduce recurrence.

In addition to the therapies mentioned, a combination of massage and other work may be included in a physical therapy plan. This may include TENS and ultrasound. Both options may help block pain messages to the brain and offer relief.

Common Causes of Poor Vision

Vision loss is a common condition. More than 285 million people across the globe suffer some type of visual impairment. Many people can effectively counter their vision problems with prescription lenses, but others may have a more significant issue, such as low vision.

The Kellogg Eye Center defines low vision as a reduced level of vision that cannot be fully corrected with conventional glasses. Those with low vision have some useful sight and are not considered completely blind. However, low vision can interfere with performance of daily activities, and some people with this condition are classified as "legally blind."

Symptoms of low vision include difficulty recognizing objects at a distance or problems with differen-

tiating colors. Specialized testing can determine if a person has low vision or another condition.

Many conditions can impact sight and contribute to vision loss. Here's a look at some of the more common ones.

Glaucoma: A person with glaucoma may gradually lose peripheral vision. Early symptoms, such as a subtle loss of contrast, may be unnoticeable.

Macular degeneration: Macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss, affecting more than 10 million people in the United States alone. It is caused by the deterioration of the retina's central portion, known as the macula. The macula is responsible for focusing central vision in the eye.

Retinal detachment: An increase of floaters or sudden flashes of light in

vision may be indicative of retinal detachment or a tear in the retina. When caught promptly, a detached retina may be repaired. However, if left untreated and the detachment reaches the macula in the center of the retina, vision loss may be irreparable.

Diabetic retinopathy: Blurring or patchy vision loss can be a side effect of high blood glucose levels.

Cataracts: According to The Mayo Clinic, a cataract is a clouding of the normally clear lens of the eye. Cataracts develop when aging or injury changes the tissue that makes up the eyes' lenses.

Routine eye examinations can bring potential vision disturbances to light and facilitate faster treatment.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

What Exactly is Cancer?

Cancer can affect anyone. Sometimes it strikes with no warning, while other times people may have a genetic predisposition. Various medical organizations say there are between 100 and 200 different types of cancer. Everyone has heard of cancer, but some are still unsure of what cancer is.

Defining Cancer

The organization Cancer Research UK defines cancer as abnormal cell growth. Cancer cells are cells that divide in an uncontrolled way. New human cells normally grow and divide to form new cells as the body requires them. As healthy cells grow old or become damaged, they die off and new cells take their place. However, when cancer develops, this process goes haywire. Damaged cells become even more abnormal and can survive when they would normally die. These cells keep multiplying and eventually can form lumps or masses of tissue called tumors. This is the case in most cancers, with the exception of leukemia, where in cancer prohibits normal blood function due to abnormal cell division in the bloodstream.

Not all lumps in the body are tumors. Lumps that remain in place and do not spread to other areas of the body can be harmless or benign. According to the American Cancer Society, cancerous tumors are malignant, which means they can spread into, or invade, near-

by tissues. Cancer stages actually are determined based by how far cancerous cells have spread beyond their point of origin.

Cancer Stages

Cancer is staged according to particular criteria based on each individual type of cancer. Generally speaking, lower stages of cancer, such as stage 1 or 2, refer to cancers that have not spread very far. Higher stages of cancer, such as 3, mean cancer has branched out more. Stage 4 refers to cancer that has spread considerably.

Common Forms Of Cancer

Cancer can occur just about anywhere in the body. Cancers of the breast, lung, colon, and prostate cancers affect males and females in high numbers.

Classifying cancer involves understanding where the cancer originated. Cancer Treatment Centers of America offers these classifications:

- Carcinomas begin in the skin or tissues that line the internal organs. Sarcomas develop in the bone, cartilage, fat, muscle or other connective tissues.
- Leukemia begins in the blood and bone marrow.
- Lymphomas start in the immune system.
- Central nervous system cancers develop in the brain and spinal cord.

Cancer is treated in various ways and depends on

the cancer's stage, type and effects on the body. A person's age as well as his or her current health status also may play a role in treatment decisions made by both the patient and his or her medical team. Surgery may be conducted to remove a tumor, while chemotherapy employs chemicals to kill cancerous cells. Radiation therapy, which uses X-rays to direct radiation toward cancerous cells, is another potential cancer treatment. The side effects of each treatment vary, and there are ways to mitigate these effects.

Why Does Cancer Occur?

Cancer develops for various reasons — some of which may not be fully understood. The National Cancer Institute states genetic changes that cause cancer can be inherited from a person's parents. Cancers can also arise during a person's lifetime as a result of errors that occur as cells divide or because of damage to DNA that results from certain environmental exposures. Cancer-causing substances include the chemicals in tobacco smoke. Ultraviolet rays from the sun also have been linked to cancer.

Learning more about cancer can help people reduce their risk for developing this potentially deadly disease. Individuals should always speak with their physicians if they have specific questions about cancer.

the US Food and Drug Administration has banned the use of such terms in cigarette sales within the United States, smokers traveling or living overseas should be mindful that other countries may not operate under such restrictions. In addition, the American Cancer Society notes that there is no proof that cigarettes sold as "all natural" and marketed as having no chemicals or additives are any safer than traditional cigarettes and that the best way for men, women and children to avoid the dangers of tobacco is to never smoke or to quit immediately.

Cancer Risk Factors You Can Control

Cancer is a formidable foe and one that the World Health Organization says is responsible for the deaths of six million people each year. But as deadly an adversary as cancer can be, millions of cases of cancer could be prevented.

According to the WHO, at least one-third of all cancer cases are preventable. Prevention begins with understanding the risk factors for cancer and what you can do to lower your risk of developing this often deadly disease. Some risk factors for cancer, including family history and gender, are beyond an individual's control. But the following are risk factors that, when avoided, can dramatically reduce a person's risk of developing cancer.

Tobacco

The WHO notes that tobacco causes an estimated 22 percent of cancer deaths each year. That translates to more than 1.3 million tobacco-related cancer deaths each year. While smokers may be most likely to develop lung cancer as a result of their tobacco use, smoking tobacco also increases a person's risk of cancers of the esophagus, larynx, mouth, throat, kidney, bladder, pancreas, stomach, and cervix. Smokeless tobacco

also increases a person's risk of oral cancer and cancers of the esophagus and pancreas. Avoiding tobacco entirely greatly reduces a person's risk of cancer, but even those who already smoke can significantly reduce their risk by quitting immediately.

Bad Diet

Several factors may cause a person to be overweight or obese, but many people who are struggling with obesity are doing so because of poor diets. An elevated risk of heart disease may be the first thing people associate with being overweight or obese, but such people are also more vulnerable to cancer than people who are in shape. The WHO notes there is a link between being overweight or obese and certain cancers, including breast and colorectal cancer. Excess consumption of red and preserved meat may increase a person's risk of colorectal cancer, while a diet high in fruits and vegetables may have the opposite effect, potentially protecting the body against various cancers.

Physical Inactivity

Though poor diet may be the primary contributing factor to being overweight or obese, a lifestyle that does

not include routine physical activity also increases a person's risk for various cancers. The National Cancer Institute notes that studies conducted around the globe have consistently found that adults who increase their physical activity, either in duration, frequency or intensity, can reduce their risk of developing colon cancer by as much as 40 percent compared to those who live physically inactive lifestyles. The NCI also notes that studies have shown that physically active women have a lower risk of developing breast cancer than women who are inactive.

Alcohol

According to the WHO, a person's risk of developing cancer increases with the amount of alcohol that person consumes. While some studies have connected moderate consumption of alcohol with a lower risk of certain ailments, alcohol consumption remains a risk factor for certain cancers, including cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, liver, and breast.

More information about cancer and the risk factors associated with cancer is available at www.who.int/cancer.

The Types of Radiation Therapies

Radiation therapy is an effective treatment option in the fight against breast cancer. Cancer cells that remain in the breast after surgery can potentially cause significant harm, and radiation therapy can effectively destroy those cells. Cancer cells are less organized than healthy cells, and that makes it hard for cancer cells to repair the damage caused by radiation therapy. According to Breastcancer.org, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing up-to-date information about breast cancer, there are three main types of radiation:

- **Internal radiation:** Internal radiation therapy is being studied for use after a lumpectomy, a surgical procedure in which a lump is removed from the breast, often before the cancer has spread to other areas. Internal radiation typically involves the use of seeds, which are small pieces of radioactive material placed in the area where the cancer was prior to the lumpectomy procedure being performed. These seeds work by emitting radiation into the surrounding tissue, which is an area that is at great risk of recurrence. Multiple small tubes or catheters are typically used to

ment with external radiation is extensive, lasting as long as seven weeks, during which radiation is administered on an outpatient basis five times per week.

- **External radiation:** The most common type of radiation, external radiation therapy employs a linear accelerator that aims a beam of high-energy radiation at cancer-affected areas. Treat-

deliver internal radiation doses.

- **Intraoperative radiation:** Intraoperative radiation is unique from other forms of radiation in that it is administered during cancer surgery after the cancer has been removed. The underlying breast tissue is exposed during the procedure, when a single, high dose of radiation is directed at the area where the cancer was found. There are two ways to administer intraoperative radiation therapy, neither of which typically takes more than 10 minutes. Debate regarding intraoperative radiation therapy persists, and research is ongoing as to who are the ideal candidates for this relatively new type of treatment.

Did you know?

According to the World Health Organization, tobacco kills up to half its users, annually killing roughly six million people each year. The WHO notes that more than five million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use, while more than 600,000 deaths can be attributed to non-smokers being exposed to secondhand smoke. While many in the United States may understand the threat that smoking poses to their overall health, the WHO notes that

studies indicate knowledge about the specific health risks of tobacco use is not widespread. A 2009 survey of smokers in China found that less than 40 percent of smokers knew that smoking tobacco causes coronary heart disease, while only 27 percent were aware of the link between smoking and stroke. It's also important that smokers recognize that cigarettes once characterized as "light" or "low tar" are not healthier than more traditional cigarettes. While

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How to Improve Quality of Life During Cancer Treatment

Fighting cancer is the biggest priority for people when they have been diagnosed with the disease. After the initial shock of diagnosis has worn off, patients can then take their first steps towards recovery.

Powerful chemotherapy drugs and radiation treatments can kill cancer cells and prevent them from spreading. Individuals may also need other medications to help mitigate the side effects of these treatments. At the end of the day, treating cancer can become a full-time job and one that can have a significant impact on the quality of life of the patient and his or her loved ones.

According to the Mayo Clinic, stress, pain and fatigue can severely diminish quality of life during and after cancer treatment. What's

more, family members caring for cancer patients also may experience diminished quality of life. Incorporating some strategies during and after treatment can help cancer patients and their caregivers maintain a high quality of life.

Exercise

Exercise pays numerous dividends for cancer patients. Exercise may help keep cancer, particularly breast cancer, in remission. The American Cancer Society says physical activity has been linked to a 24 percent decrease in breast cancer coming back, and a 34 percent decrease in breast cancer deaths.

Exercise also can affect the following:

- balance
- control weight
- self-esteem

- strength of bones
- lessening risk of blood clots
- reduction of nausea and fatigue

Stress Reduction

Cancer patients also can benefit from therapies that promote the reduction of stress and anxiety. The Mayo Clinic studied formal sessions that promoted physical therapy, coping strategies or addressing spiritual concerns, and deep breathing or guided imagery to reduce stress. Those who engaged in these therapies showed marked improvement at a critical time in care.

Exercise, talking about the cancer and reducing feelings of stress are important to maintaining quality of life during cancer treatment.

Signs and Symptoms of Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among men in the world. According to the World Cancer Research Fund International, more than 1.1 million cases of prostate cancer were recored in 2012.

Prostate cancer is often found before any symptoms arise. Prostate cancer screening no doubt contributes to that early detection. Many men are reluctant to be screened, feeling that the digital rectal exam, is simply too uncomfortable to undergo.

Not everyone will experience symptoms of prostate cancer, but some men will. Sometimes the presence of certain problems associated with prostate cancer may be indicative of other conditions, including benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH. BPH is not cancer, but it is an enlargement of



the prostate. Symptoms of prostatitis may also resemble the symptoms of prostate cancer.

While not everyone experiences symptoms of prostate cancer, some men may experience changes in their urinary or sexual function. Men who notice the presence of any of the following symptoms should consult their physicians immediately.

- A need to urinate fre-

quently, especially at night

- Difficulty starting urination or holding back urine

- Weak or interrupted flow of urine

- Painful or burning urination

- Difficulty having an erection

- Painful ejaculation
- Blood in urine or semen

More information about prostate cancer is available at www.pcf.org.

Coffee And Colon Health

Coffee compels many people to rise out of bed every morning. While individuals have many reasons to drink caffeinated beverages, the most notable is often the pep such beverages provide. But coffee, tea and other caffeinated beverages actually may provide additional benefits, including helping to fend off disease, including colorectal cancer.

The American Cancer Society estimates that, in the United States, more than 95,000 new cases of colon cancer and 39,000 new cases of rectal cancer will be diagnosed in 2016. Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in men and women. However, coffee may help reduce instances of colon cancer.

A study titled "Coffee Consumption and the Risk of Colorectal Cancer," which was published in the journal Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention, found that regular coffee consumption inversely correlates to colorectal cancer risk. Coffee has been identified as a protective agent against

colorectal cancer, as several of its components affect the physiology of the colon and can make cancerous cells less likely to take root there. The Journal of the National Cancer Institute also substantiates these claims. Frequent coffee consumption has been associated with a reduced risk of colorectal cancer in a number of case-control studies - for both men and women.

Drinking coffee may not only help keep cancer at bay, it may boost the survival rate from colon cancer, too. Information from a study published in The Journal of Clinical Oncology stated that colon cancer patients who are heavy coffee drinkers have a far lower risk of dying or having their cancer return than those who do not drink coffee. Significant benefits start at two to three cups per day. People who consumed four cups of caffeinated coffee or more a day had half the rate of recurrence or death than non-coffee drinkers.

Other data indicates caffeine alone may not be behind the reduced cancer risks and rates - it may be the coffee

itself. Researchers at the University of Southern California Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center of Keck Medicine found that decreased colorectal risk was seen across all types of coffee, both caffeinated and decaffeinated. According to Dr. Stephen Gruber, the author of the study, coffee contains many elements that contribute to overall colorectal health, which may explain coffee's preventive properties. Caffeine and polyphenol can act as antioxidants, limiting the growth of potential colon cancer cells. Melanoidins generated during the roasting process have been thought to encourage colon mobility, and diterpenes may prevent cancer by enhancing the body's defense against oxidative damage.

Although data continues to suggest that coffee can help reduce colorectal cancer risk and survival rates, additional information is still needed before doctors can start recommending coffee consumption as a preventative measure.

The Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

Cancer is a formidable foe. Among women, no cancer poses a greater threat than breast cancer. Gaining a greater understanding of breast cancer may not prevent the onset of this disease, but it might increase the chances of early detection. The following are the established risk factors for breast cancer.

- **Gender:** Being female is the single biggest risk factor for developing breast cancer. Men can get breast cancer, but the risk for men is substantially smaller than it is for women.

- **Age:** The American Cancer Society notes that

about two out of every three invasive breast cancers are found in women ages 55 and older, whereas just one out of every eight invasive breast cancers are found in women younger than 45.

- **Family history:** A family history of breast cancer increases a woman's risk factor by two or three. Women who have had one first-degree female relative, which includes sisters, mothers and daughters, diagnosed with breast cancer are at double the risk for breast cancer than women without such family histories.

- **Menstrual history:**

Women who began menstruating younger than age 12 have a higher risk of developing breast cancer later in life than women who began menstruating after their twelfth birthdays.

- **Lifestyle choices:** 21 percent of all breast cancer deaths across the globe are attributable to alcohol consumption, overweight and obesity and physical inactivity. Women can do nothing to control breast cancer risk factors like gender, age and family history, but making the right lifestyle choices can reduce the likelihood that they will develop breast cancer.

Did you know?

Men have a small amount of breast tissue, and that means they can be affected by breast cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, men's breast tissue has ducts, but only few, if any, lobules. That's because men do not have enough fe-

male hormones to promote the growth of breast cells. Breast cancer can be separated into several types based on what the cancer cells look like under the microscope. They can be in-situ, meaning non-invasive or pre-invasive. They also

may be invasive types that have spread to the ducts in the breast tissue. Breast cancer is about 100 times less common among men than among women. Only about 2,600 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in men this year. But men who feel lumps or other anomalies in the area around the nipple should consult their physicians.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Effective Ways to Reduce Asthma Attacks

Millions of people have asthma, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. It is one of the most common and costly diseases, and still has no cure.

Swelling of the airways occurs when a person has asthma. This can result in wheezing, coughing and tightness in the chest. Asthma attacks can prove deadly. There are ways to lessen the frequency and severity of attacks. Most of these tips involve reducing contact with allergens that can trigger asthma attacks.

Home

First, assess your house to identify and reduce common allergens.

Wash linens and clothing in hot water to kill off any dust mites. The water temperature should be at least 130 F.

Keep companion animals off of furniture and beds where they can leave fur and dander behind. Limit the rooms in which pets can

stay. There is some research that states children exposed to animals early in life may actually be less likely to develop allergies and asthma.

Put allergy-proof covers on pillows.

Vacuum at least twice a week with a HEPA air filter-enhanced vacuum cleaner.

Reduce humidity around the house, as it can lead to the prevalence of mold. Mold is a common asthma trigger. That means using a dehumidifier, keeping bathrooms clean and dry and repairing any leaks promptly.

Outside, Work and School

You may have less control over allergens outside of the home, but there are still ways to cut down on attacks.

Avoid smoking areas outside of stores and office buildings.

Secondhand smoke has been shown to increase the development of asthma and other chronic respiratory illnesses.

Cleaning products and other chemicals can trigger attacks, know the office cleaning schedule and work around those hours.

Keep stress at a minimum because intense emotions can bring on asthma symptoms.

Check the air quality outdoors before venturing outside. Stay inside during ozone alerts or when the air is very humid or stagnant.

Seasonal allergies and asthma often go hand-in-hand. Check pollen, mold and ragweed counts. Stay indoors on peak days.

Be sure physical education teachers are aware that gym class may trigger asthma attacks in your children, and that they should look for apparent symptoms.

In addition to these tips, a rescue inhaler can help quiet a potential attack. Keep medication available at all times. Plus, speak with a doctor about customizing an attack prevention plan even further. More information is available at www.aaaai.org.

Simple Ways to Fight Back Against Fatigued Eyes

Eyestrain affects people from all walks of life. Many professionals suffer eyestrain as a result of too many hours spent staring at computer screens. The same can be said for children, who might spend hours doing homework on their computers before hitting the couch for a few spirited rounds of video games.

Before you can combat eyestrain, it's best to confirm that your vision troubles are the result of eyestrain and not something more serious. Eye doctors can provide such confirmation, but you can be

on the lookout for common symptoms of eyestrain.

Perhaps the most common side effect of eyestrain is how annoying it can feel. The following are some symptoms of eyestrain that can pop up when eyes are overused:

- Sore, tired, burning, or itching eyes; abnormally watery eyes; abnormally dry eyes; blurred or double vision; headache; increased sensitivity to light; feeling that you cannot keep your eyes open

If eyestrain is the culprit, then there are some ways to remedy your problems.

- Adjust lighting. Reducing glare from the screen can reduce symptoms of eyestrain. Lighting your work area with a shaded light positioned in front of you can reduce strain.
- Take frequent breaks. When sitting at your desk, look away from your monitor. Looking at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes can provide the respite your eyes need.
- Make yourself cry (artificially). Artificial tears are a proactive way to combat eyestrain.

Did you know?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that roughly 30 percent of the population complains of chronic back pain in a given year. Lower back pain is a problem that plagues millions of people and can lead to lost hours of work, poor quality of life and reduced

mobility. In fact, according to Global Burden of Disease 2010, low back pain is the single leading cause of disability worldwide. People spend around \$50 billion each year on back pain treatments. One solution to back pain is to consult with a chiropractor. The Amer-

ican Chiropractic Association says chiropractic spinal manipulation is a safe and effective pain treatment. It also can help return mobility and flexibility to the back. With addiction to pain medications such a prevalent problem in both the United States and Canada, chiropractic care may be a good first step to alleviate pain and discomfort in the back.

Diabetic Vision Changes

Routine eye examinations can help doctors diagnose diabetes early. Such examinations also are important in the management of the disease and the prevention of vision loss.

Some people are surprised to learn that diabetes can affect the eyes and vision.

Changes in vision are sometimes the earliest warning signs of the presence of diabetes or prediabetes. Diabetic eye disease is its own stand-alone condition and comprises a group of eye conditions that affect people with diabetes. These may include retinopathy, macular

edema, cataracts and glaucoma. All forms of eye disease can potentially cause severe vision loss or blindness.

According to the American Diabetes Association, people with diabetes are at a 40 percent greater risk of suffering from glaucoma than people without diabetes. Diabetics also are 60 percent more likely to develop cataracts. Vision checkups and care are an important part of living with diabetes.

Routine eye examinations can head off potential vision problem. When an eye is dilated, doctors can examine the retina at the rear of

the eye. Points that will be checked include:

- changes to blood vessels, including any leaking blood vessels or fatty deposits
- swelling of the macula
- damage to nerve tissue
- health of the retina, and whether there are any tears or detachments

While many of the vision loss problems associated with diabetes are irreversible, early detection and treatment can reduce the risk of blindness by 95 percent. Controlling diabetes slows the onset and worsening of visual symptoms.

Recognizing Cancers of the Eye, Eyelid

Cancer involves the uncontrolled division of abnormal cells in a particular part of the body. Cancer begins in one area, but it can invade or spread to other parts of the body if it goes undetected or untreated.

No area of the body, including the eyes and eyelids, is immune to cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, the most common type of eye cancer that affects adults is ocular melanoma, while children are more likely to experience retinoblastoma.

Cancer can affect the three main parts of the eye, which include the eyeball, orbit and adnexal structures. The eyeball includes the sclera, uvea and retina. The orbit is the tissue surrounding the eyeball and the muscles that move the eye in different directions. Adnexal structures include the

eyelids and the tear glands. Cancer that begins in the eyeball is known as intraocular cancer. Many cases of adnexal cancer, or cancer that affects the eyelid, may actually be skin cancer. In fact, MD Anderson Cancer center says more than 90 percent of eyelid cancers are basal cell carcinomas of the skin.

Eye cancer may or may not produce symptoms, and any symptoms it does produce may be different based on the type of cancer present. Symptoms in adults may include: a red or painful eye, blurred vision in one eye, change in iris color or dark spots on the iris, bulging of the eye, "floaters" in the field of vision, loss of peripheral vision.

Early signs of eye cancer are most often discovered by an eye doctor during routine eye examinations. A person

who has any unusual changes in vision will want to visit an ophthalmologist promptly. Many cancers can be easily diagnosed by a trained physician, and early detection can improve prognosis. The ACS estimates that, in 2015, there will be 2,580 new cancers (mainly melanomas) of the eye and orbit - 1,360 in men and 1,220 in women.

Treatments for eye cancers are similar to the options for cancers that begin elsewhere. Surgery, radiation therapy, laser therapy, chemotherapy, and other targeted therapies may be used alone or in conjunction with another depending on the type of eye cancer present. Every step will be taken to improve health and reduce the effects of treatment on vision.

Did you know?

Though the importing and use of asbestos has decreased dramatically since the mid-1970s, asbestos is still used in some products. According to the U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration, more than a million American employees, many of whom work in the construction industry, face significant exposure to asbestos on the job. A group

of minerals that occur naturally as bundles of fibers, asbestos has been linked to cancer, a connection that was ultimately discovered after evidence in the first half of the 20th century increasingly showed that breathing in asbestos caused scarring of the lungs. The most common way people are exposed to asbestos is through asbestos inhalation. Inhalation of

asbestos occurs during the mining and production of asbestos and when people are involved in the making of products that contain asbestos. While such products are banned in many countries, including throughout the European Union, some countries have yet to ban the use of asbestos. Asbestos also can be inhaled when people are exposed to insulation that contains asbestos, which is generally found in older homes.



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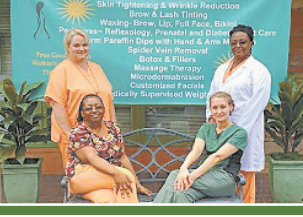
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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Help Kids Feel Comfortable at the Dentist

Routine dental examinations and cleanings are an important component of oral healthcare for both children. Many parents are reluctant to bring their children for fear of how their kids will behave.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that a child go to the dentist by age 1, or within six months of the eruption of his or her first tooth.

Parents worried about how their kids will respond to the dentist can take the following steps to acclimate kids to dental visits.

- **Be a positive role model.** Children frequently learn by example.
- **Stick to the first-tooth milestone.** Take your child to the dentist on or about when his or her first tooth erupts.
- **Read books about**



the dentist and role play.

• **Be supportive and instill trust.** Simply be supportive and offer a hand to squeeze or a hug if your child needs you.

• **Consider using your dentist.** Some parents like to take their children to a pediatric dentist, but it may not always be necessary.

• **Steer clear of negative words.** Let the office staff come up with their own words to describe processes that won't seem too frightening.

By employing these techniques, kids' dental visits can be more pleasant for all involved, paving the way for a lifetime of healthy teeth.

Why Dental Hygiene is Essential for Overall Health

The health of teeth and gums can impact other parts of the body.

The importance of maintaining clean teeth and healthy gums goes beyond having fresh breath and a white smile. Research indicates that oral health mirrors the condition of the body as a whole.

Regular dental visits can alert dentists about overall health and pinpoint if a person is at a risk for chronic disease. An oral health check-up also may be the first indication of a potential health issue not yet evident to a general medical doctor.

Heart Disease

People with bleeding gums from poor dental

hygiene could have an increased risk of heart disease. Bacteria are able to enter the bloodstream when bleeding gums are present. Bacteria can stick to platelets and subsequently form blood clots.

Facial Pain

Infections of the gums that support the teeth can lead to facial and oral pain. Gingivitis, which is an early stage of gum disease, affects more than 75 percent of the American population. Dental decay can lead to its own share of pain.

Pancreatic Cancer

The Harvard researchers found that men with a history of gum disease had a 64 percent increased risk

of pancreatic cancer. The greatest risk for pancreatic cancer among this group was in men with recent tooth loss.

Alzheimer's Disease

Data indicated that a bacterium - *Porphyromonas gingivalis* - was present in the Alzheimer's brain samples. Experts think that the bacteria can move via nerves in the roots of teeth that connect directly with the brain or through bleeding gums.

These health conditions are just a sampling of the relationship between oral health and overall health. Additional connections also have been made and continue to be studied.

of the stomach. Selye would go on to discover General Adaptation Syndrome, which he described as the body's response to the demands placed on it. That syndrome noted how stressful situations induced involuntary hormonal responses that contributed to a host of negative side effects, including high blood pressure and arteriosclerosis, that are still associated with stress today.

Did you know?

Born in 1907, Hungarian physician Hans Selye is credited with coining the medical term "stress" in 1936. While studying medicine at the German Medical School in Prague, Selye, at the ripe old age of 17, observed that patients suffering from various diseases had a tendency to exhibit identical signs

and symptoms. According to the American Institute of Stress, Selye tested animals with various physical and emotional stimuli, noting that, regardless of the stimuli, the animals all exhibited the same pathologic changes, namely enlargement of the adrenals, shrinkage of lymphoid tissue and ulcerations

How Music May Improve Health

Plato said, "Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything." While many people love music for its entertainment value, there is growing evidence that music can be good for overall health as well.

A study from researchers at the Cleveland Clinic focused on the use of music for brain surgery patients who must be awake during their procedures. Researchers found that music enabled the patients to manage anxiety, reduce pain and relax more fully during their procedures.

In a clinical trial conducted by a team of Swedish researchers, patients who were allowed to listen to music during heart surgery recuperation and bed rest had lower cortisol levels than those who rested without music.

Many doctors now play music while operating or enable patients to listen to



music to calm their nerves during in-office procedures.

Music has also been shown to enhance memory and stimulate both sides of the brain, which may help individuals recover from stroke or those suffering from cognitive impairments.

Music also can have a positive impact on mood. Neuroscientists have discovered that listening to music heightens positive emotions through the reward centers of the brain. Music stimulates the pro-

duction of dopamine, creating positive feelings as a result.

Some researchers think that music may help improve immune response, promoting faster recovery from illness.

When exercising, upbeat music can help a person go a little further as they work to achieve their fitness goals than working out without music. Listening to songs can distract one from the task at hand, pushing focus onto the music rather than the hard work being done.

Steps to Achieve a Better Work-Life Balance

Many people face the challenge of balancing work and family. Workloads may be hefty on both fronts.

Stress can build from feelings of being pulled in too many directions. According to Mental Health America, stress can compromise a person's ability to concentrate, lead to feelings of irritability or depression, negatively affect personal relationships, and weaken immune systems, increasing a person's susceptibility to a variety of ailments. Research even indicates chronic stress may double a person's risk of having a heart attack.

Living a fulfilling life often involves finding the right work-life balance, and the following tips can help make that possible.

• **Establish your priorities.** Make a list of the things that are most important to you. Having this list put on paper can make goals more attainable. Think about the main things you want to focus on in life and go from there.

• **Learn to manage your time.** One of the keys

to creating a work-life balance is to hone your time management skills. Effective time management can help you fit more in without feeling rushed or anxious. Start by determining just how much time you need to perform certain tasks. Then divide up the day accordingly. You may find that by waking up an hour earlier each day, you achieve a lot more without affecting your well-being. Quiet time at home in the morning can be a prime time to fit in a workout or catch up on paperwork.

• **Don't procrastinate.** Stick to your schedule so you don't feel stressed and as if you are constantly rushing around. Complete one item before you move on to the next.

• **Communicate effectively with your bosses.** Be honest with your bosses or colleagues if you feel like work is negatively impacting your home life. Supervisors may be flexible and receptive to feedback if it means keeping good employees happy and productive. Bosses may allow

you to work from home or be willing to arrange a flex schedule.

• **Unplug at home.** When spending time at home with your loved ones, disconnect from your devices, especially those that connect you to work. Making yourself too available for work can be a detriment to your health and family.

• **Divide your responsibilities.** Allow family members to tackle some chores or other household duties so it will free up more time to spend together.

• **Schedule a mental break each day.** Give yourself time to perform one activity per day that you really enjoy. This will help you recharge and manage stress even further. Activities may include sports, hobbies or exercise.

Finding the right balance between work and family requires some maneuvering and practice, but it can be achieved with planning, organization and communication.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Childhood Insomnia

Insomnia, or trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, is largely thought of as an adult problem. But children can suffer from insomnia as well, and that can prove disruptive for the entire family. Children who do not receive an adequate amount of sleep can feel tired and irritable, and may have difficulty concentrating in

school. Many factors can contribute to the onset of childhood insomnia. Kids, just like adults, can suffer from stress, which then manifests itself as worry or an overactive mind at night, says the Cleveland Clinic. Depression, anxiety, pain, or other medical problems also may be the catalyst for insomnia. While common

insomnia medications used in adults are not approved for children, there are steps parents can take. A solid bedtime routine, including consistent bedtimes and wake times, can help combat child insomnia. Try to identify stressors and remedy them as well. In some instances, a pediatrician or therapist may be needed to help a child work through sleep-related issues.

Health Problems That Can Affect Premature Babies

The period of time before a child is born is an exciting one for expecting parents. As mothers' due dates draw nearer, that anticipation only grows. But some babies arrive early, quickly turning parents' excitement into anxiety. Thankfully, according to March of Dimes®, an organization dedicated to preventing birth defects and infant mortality, continuing advancements in medical care means even babies born very prematurely are now more likely to survive than ever before. The following health conditions are some problems that parents of premature babies should be on the lookout for, alerting their health care providers about any conditions their babies have.

- **Apnea:** Apnea is a temporary cessation of breathing, and some premature babies may experience pauses in breathing for 20 seconds or more. Apnea may be accompanied by a slow heart rate.
- **Respiratory distress syndrome:** The March of Dimes notes that respiratory distress syndrome, or RDS, is most common in babies born before 34 weeks of pregnancy. RDS occurs in infants whose lungs have not

yet fully developed. The U.S. National Library of Medicine cites lack of surfactant, a slippery substance in the lungs, as the main cause of RDS. Surfactant, which is present in fully developed lungs, helps the lungs fill with air and keeps the air sacs from deflating.

- **Intraventricular hemorrhage:** Stanford Children's Health notes that intraventricular hemorrhage, or IVH, is most common in premature babies with very low birthweights, especially those weighing less than 3 pounds, 5 ounces at birth. IVH is bleeding inside or around the ventricles, which are the spaces in the brain containing the cerebral spinal fluid. It is unclear why IVH occurs, but it may be linked to the fragile, immature and easily ruptured blood vessels in premature babies' brains.

- **Patent ductus arteriosus:** Patent ductus arteriosus, or PDA, is a problem related to the baby's heart, namely an unclosed hole in the aorta. According to the American Heart Association, before a child is born, the fetus's blood does not need to go to the lungs to get oxygenated. The ductus arteriosus is a hole in the

aorta that allows the blood to skip circulation to the lungs. This hole is supposed to close when the baby is born so the blood can receive oxygen in the lungs. When it does not close, the baby may experience difficulty breathing or even heart failure.

- **Necrotizing enterocolitis:** The Children's Hospital Los Angeles notes that necrotizing enterocolitis, often referred to as NEC, affects the intestines of nearly 1 in 10 infants born prematurely. NEC occurs when the wall of the intestine is invaded by bacteria, resulting in local infection and inflammation that may end up destroying the wall of the intestine. That destruction can cause the intestine to become perforated and lead to the spillage of stool into the infant's abdomen, which can cause infection and possibly even death. The March of Dimes notes that NEC sometimes occurs two to three weeks after a premature birth and may produce symptoms such as problems feeding, a swollen belly and diarrhea.

Learn more about premature babies at www.marchofdimes.org.

Did you know?

Women have so much on their mind during pregnancy that it can be easy to overlook something as mundane as keeping their teeth clean. Oral hygiene is not readily discussed when a woman conceives. Doctors and dentists advise regular oral examinations and professional teeth cleaning throughout

pregnancy. Hormones trigger changes that can be cause for concern. Women are more likely to develop gingivitis during pregnancy. Dentists may suggest more frequent cleanings during pregnancy to prevent any problems. Lumps that appear along the gum line and between teeth also may

appear during pregnancy. These "pregnancy tumors" are harmless and not cancerous. However, if they become bothersome, a dentist can remove them. Women should inform their dentists they are pregnant so precautions can be taken. All health concerns can be mentioned to your obstetrician, who may advise further action by a dentist.

How Breastfeeding Benefits Mother and Child Later in Life

Breastfeeding is a natural and often convenient method of providing nutrition to a growing infant. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise that breast milk is widely acknowledged as the most complete form of nutrition, with a range of benefits for infants' health, growth, immunity, and development. Formula can come close to replicating the benefits of breast milk, but many mothers still prefer to feed their youngsters their natural breast milk instead of formula.

Due to its unique combination of nutrients, breast milk can present a number of health advantages that begin at birth and continue throughout a child's life - even into adulthood. Some health experts believe that many of the health problems children face today can be prevented or decreased if they are exclusively breastfed up until six months of age.

Benefits for Baby

Some of the initial benefits of breastfeeding include regulating healthy bacteria in the child's digestive system. Breastfed

babies may have fewer cases of ear infections, bacterial problems and gastrointestinal infections. Breast milk also can work as an antibiotic agent against E. coli, staph and other conditions, says the La Leche League. The American Pregnancy Association advises that colostrum, the first excretion of food from the breast, contains high contents of carbohydrates, proteins and antibodies to help keep a newborn healthy. It also acts as a natural laxative and can clear the stomach of excess bilirubin, which can contribute to jaundice.

According to Baby Center, studies have shown that breastfeeding can reduce a child's risk of developing certain childhood cancers. Scientists don't know exactly how breast milk reduces that risk, but they think antibodies in breast milk may give the child's immune system a boost.

In time, breastfed children may have lower rates of obesity later in life, and some children who were breastfed have lower instances of food allergies and autoimmune conditions.

Benefits for Mother

Studies indicate that breastfeeding helps improve mothers' health as well as their children's. Breastfeeding can help a woman lose excess weight after birth by burning many calories from lactation. It also will stimulate the release of the hormone, oxytocin, which causes the uterus to return to its normal size more quickly. Breastfeeding serves as a natural form of birth control, protecting a woman from becoming pregnant again too soon.

The Natural Resources Defense Council says women who breastfeed are less likely to develop uterine, endometrial or ovarian cancer. Breastfeeding also may prevent a mother's risk of developing osteoporosis later in life.

Women who have breastfed attest to having an earlier and more substantial bond with their children as well, which can promote positive feelings and good mental health.

Mothers should explore breastfeeding upon giving birth. Lactation consultants can help first-time mothers get started.

If Not Vaccines, What Causes Autism?

The prevalence of autism and the mystery behind it has left families, doctors and researchers perplexed as they continue to look for possible causes for of the condition.

Autism spectrum disorder is a neurodevelopmental condition that involves deficits in social communication and interactions across multiple settings and situations. Some people with autism may have trouble communicating, while others may recede from social situations. Other signs can include repetitive behaviors or extreme focus in one concentration of activity.

There is no single cause of ASD, but medical professionals generally accept that it is linked to abnormalities in the brain structure and its function. Vaccines are not linked to autism, despite misinformation that has spread in recent years. That potential link between vaccines

and autism was discredited as far back as 1998.

Researchers at the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center have found autism likely starts well before the emergence of any noticeable symptoms, and the following factors may play a role in the development of ASD.

- **Pesticides:** Some studies have found that pesticides may interfere with genes involved in the central nervous system. These chemicals may adversely affect people predisposed to autism.

- **Genetic vulnerability:** The Autism Society states ASD tends to occur more frequently among individuals with certain medical conditions, including fragile X syndrome, tuberous sclerosis, congenital rubella syndrome and untreated phenylketonuria, or PKU. Ingesting harmful substances during pregnancy also has been linked to increased risk of autism

for the child.

- **Pharmaceuticals:** Babies who have been exposed to certain pharmaceuticals in the womb, including valproic acid, which is used for seizures and mood disorders, and thalidomide, have been found to have a high risk of autism for the child. Thalidomide was once used for morning sickness and anxiety, and it can still be prescribed as a treatment for cancer.

- **Parental age:** According to UC Davis Health System researchers, autism risk increases with parental age. Conception by older parents (age 40-plus) may increase the chances for ASD compared to pregnancies for those in their 20s.

ASD continues to affect millions of people across the globe. Understanding potential risk factors may help individuals make smarter choices as they consider expanding their families.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Maintain A Safe, Healthy Pregnancy

You've received the good news, now it is time to take care of your body and the new life growing inside of it. Prioritizing overall health is a great way to increase your chances of a safe and healthy pregnancy.

- **Visit an obstetrician or midwife as soon as possible.** Once the pregnancy test comes out positive, make an appointment with your doctor to discuss the course of the pregnancy and what can be done from the start.

- **Discuss age and risk factors with the doctor.** Many women in North America now become pregnant for the first time between the ages 25 and 29, while many more wait until their 30s. Waiting longer to become pregnant for the first time may increase a woman's risk for certain conditions during pregnancy. Your doctor can answer any questions you

may have and let you know about additional testing that may be necessary.

- **Don't overeat.** Eating right is one of the best things you can do for yourself and the baby. Anything you put in your body can affect the baby. Contrary to popular belief, you do not need to eat for two. During the first few months, you may not have much of an appetite. The fetus does not require many additional nutrients until the end of the pregnancy. Only then will an increase of 200 calories or so be adequate.

- **Choose healthy foods.** Avoid undercooked foods and soft cheeses that may harbor bacteria. Some seafood, such as tuna or shark, may contain high levels of mercury. Lean meats, fruits, vegetables, fiber, and dairy products can fuel your body and keep the baby growing.

- **Continue to exercise.** Unless there are complica-

tions during your pregnancy, you likely can continue to exercise. However, don't overdo it with exercise, and call your doctor if you experience any adverse side effects during or after exercise sessions.

- **Avoid drugs, tobacco and alcohol.** Smoking, taking drugs or drinking during pregnancy can cause serious health problems for the baby. Miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight, and SIDS are just a few of the potential side effects of drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco or taking drugs while pregnant. Avoid these behaviors and always check with a doctor before taking any over-the-counter or herbal remedies as well.

- **Get educated.** Pick up a book from a reputable doctor or author so that you can better understand your pregnancy.

Be Safe, Healthy & Happy In The Workplace While Pregnant

Congratulations, you are pregnant. The next several months are certain to include many changes as you prepare for the arrival of your child. The first thing pregnant working women should know is that they have the right to work while pregnant. In the United States, it has been illegal to discriminate against pregnant women in the workplace since 1978, when the Pregnancy Discrimination Act was passed.

But in spite of those laws, some employers may be less receptive to their female employees' pregnancies, with some insisting they harbor good intentions, such as the woman's safety. Businesses cannot fire employees for being pregnant, and many courts have ruled that decisions about

the safety of the woman and fetus are up to the employee and her doctor, not her boss. On the same token, a company cannot refuse to hire a person simply because she's pregnant.

In some instances, work requirements may threaten the safety or the health of the fetus. Therefore, employers are under a duty to accommodate female workers who may need to modify their duties due to their pregnancies. It is the employer's responsibility to accommodate pregnant employees by removing barriers that may limit those employees' ability to do their jobs.

Under the Family and Medical Leave Act, women in the United States are entitled to 12 weeks maternity leave. Women can choose

to use a portion of that maternity leave even before their children are born if physical limitations are making it challenging for them to continue working. Women should not hesitate to speak with their employers about their comfort levels while pregnant. If an issue arises, speak with your boss, who deserves the benefit of the doubt.

Pregnant women should discuss with their doctors which work activities are permissible and which should be avoided at particular times in the pregnancy. Every effort should be made to avoid toxic substances, and pregnant women should not lift heavy items or engage in any potentially risky physical activity.

Did you know?

A prediabetes diagnosis means you have higher than normal blood glucose levels, but not high enough to be considered diabetes. Excessive glucose in the blood can damage the body over time, and those diagnosed with prediabetes are at risk for developing type

2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. The majority of people with prediabetes do not have any symptoms. The condition is typically revealed after blood tests indicate blood glucose levels are higher than normal. Being overweight and living an inactive lifestyle are

two of the biggest risk factors for prediabetes. Doctors may recommend that men and women 45 and older, especially those who are overweight, be tested for prediabetes. Men and women who lose at least 5 to 10 percent of their starting weight can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes and may even be able to reverse prediabetes.

Human Foods Pets Should Avoid

The revenue of the pet care industry is testament to the lengths people will go to ensure their pets are comfortable and receiving a high level of care. Many owners believe giving treats of human food is the ultimate indulgence. However, the beloved pets can be exposed to health problems by feeding them the wrong foods.

The Humane Society warns that foods that are considered good for people

can be dangerous for pets. This includes common fruits and vegetables. Many people are unaware that certain foods present a hazard to their pets' health.

Although any food not specifically designed for cats and dogs can affect the digestive system, resulting in vomiting, diarrhea or intestinal distress, the following foods are particularly problematic for companion animals.

- Alcohol

- Chocolate
- Dairy products
- Fat trimmings, raw meat, raw eggs and raw fish
- Grapes and raisins
- Macadamia nuts
- Sweetened candy

Foods that people consume should not be shared with pets unless they have been recommended by a veterinarian. Even then, human food should be shared sparingly.

Dog Training

The benefits of dog training extend to both the owner and the animal engaged in the training. Dogs that are properly trained are happier than those that are not trained because trained dogs know boundaries and what to expect each day. Dog trainers and animal experts routinely point to lack of structure in a dog's life as the main reasons why pets engage in poor behavior or develop unsavory dispositions. Proper training

can remove many of the challenges owners and pets face together.

Dogs are not only intelligent animals, but also social ones. Dogs come from a well-established lineage of pack animals. Like their close cousins, the wolves, dogs inherently fit into a social order within a pack. Without parameters, dogs can be unstable, confused and always in conflict.

Pet owners who establish

themselves as the pack leader and provide consistent instruction and control can improve their dogs' lives. Pet owners can make decisions for their dogs while making sure they, and not the dogs, are the ones in control. Establishing dominance should not be mistaken for cruelty.

All in all, training and obedience will strengthen the bond between pet and owner. And the more reliable and trustworthy the dog's behavior, the greater freedom he or she can be given - which can lead to a happier life.

Get the Facts on Rabies

The World Health Organization says rabies causes thousands of deaths every year.

Humans and animals can get rabies any time of year. Children who spend time outside playing may be especially susceptible because they may not recognize rabies warning signs in animals afflicted with the disease.

What Is Rabies?

Rabies is transmitted from animals to humans and vice versa. In the United States, rabies has been reported in every state except Hawaii. Most cases of rabies in humans occur in rural areas where effective treatments are not readily accessible.

Pets may act strangely and become unapproachable when they contract the

disease. Rabies attacks the brain and spinal cord. Animals can develop hypersensitivity to light and sound as well as paralysis of the nerves that control the head and throat.

How Is Rabies Contracted?

Rabies is a virus that is spread through contact with saliva from an infected animal. This occurs when an infected animal bites another animal or person, but it also can be contracted if that animal licks a scratch or open wound. Once symptoms appear, such as fever and pain, rabies can be fatal.

Which Animals Get Rabies?

Rabies only affects mammals. Many people attribute

rabies to raccoons. The CDC has indicated that raccoons are the most common wild animal with rabies. In the United States alone, about 93 of every 100 reported cases of rabies are in wild animals.

Rabies Prevention

Vaccinations can protect domestic pets against rabies. Rabies shots are required by law in many areas.

People should steer clear of wild animals to avoid rabies. Animals afflicted with rabies may exhibit peculiar behavior or act out of characters. Anyone who suspects a sick animal should promptly call the local animal control center and have an officer come and check it out.

Did you know?

Animals verbalize in many different ways. One thing cat owners may notice is the tendency to meow

as a form of speaking with humans. However, cats almost never meow at other cats, as meowing is a sound

generally reserved for interacting with humans. Cat owners should talk back to their cats often, as cats enjoy hearing their own names and their owners' voices.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Isolation a Concern For Seniors' Families

Feelings of loneliness and isolation are common among the senior population. As people get older, their likelihood of living alone only increases, as many have fewer family members or friends around to provide company and care. Despite the large numbers of Baby Boomers living throughout North America, senior isolation is still a concern. According to

the senior housing resource A Place for Mom, the following situations can result from senior isolation.

Studies from the National Center on Elder Abuse show a connection between social isolation and higher rates of elder abuse.

Feelings of loneliness can be linked to poor cognitive performance.

Loneliness is associated with more depressive symp-

toms among seniors.

A 2010 study published in Psychology and Aging indicated a direct relationship between loneliness in older adults and increases in systolic blood pressure over a four-year period.

Visiting with seniors and promoting social connections can help them avoid feelings of isolation.

The Early Warning Signs Of Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. It is a progressive, degenerative disorder that attacks neurons and essentially robs people of their memory and language skills. Although there is no cure for Alzheimer's, there are therapies that can slow its neurological impact. Recognizing the early warning signs of Alzheimer's can encourage people to begin treatments that can stave off some of the more debilitating symptoms of this disease.

Alzheimer's is not a normal part of aging. It is believed damage starts a decade or more before problems become evident. Once healthy neurons gradually begin to lose their efficiency and ability to function and communicate with one another. As more neurons die, entire areas of the brain shrink. The area of the brain essential in forming memories soon becomes compromised.

Millions of people in North America are estimated to have Alzheimer's disease and many others will be diagnosed. The following are the most common early signs and symptoms of the disease.

• **Memory Loss:** Forgetting recently learned information and having to rely increasingly on memo-



ry aids is another potential indicator of Alzheimer's.

• **Declining cognition:** Trouble finding the right words and visual and spatial issues also may be early indicator.

• **Difficulty completing familiar tasks:** Those with Alzheimer's sometimes have issues driving to a familiar location or have trouble following once familiar simple recipes.

• **Time confusion:** One may have trouble understanding something that isn't happening in the present. Alzheimer's sufferers often forget where they are and how they got there.

• **Misplacing items:** Those with Alzheimer's may put items in unusual

places. They may sometimes accuse others of stealing when they cannot find items.

• **Decreased judgment:** A person with Alzheimer's may take unnecessary risks or give away sums of money.

• **Mood changes:** People with Alzheimer's may suffer from confusion, suspicious feelings, depression and anxiety causing anxiety.

Age and family history of Alzheimer's disease are the biggest risk factors. A physical and neurological exam, which may include blood tests and brain imaging, will be used to diagnose Alzheimer's disease.

Protecting Skin as it Ages

As the body changes with age, so do the needs of the skin. While acne and breakouts may have been the bane of existence as an adolescent, wrinkles and dark spots are concerns as we age.

Skin changes are one of the most noticeable signs of aging. Sagging skin and wrinkles are two of the more common problems men and women encounter as they age.

As people get older, connective tissues in the skin have a tendency of breaking down. The blood vessels of the dermis become more fragile, which can lead to bruising. Also, sebaceous glands may produce less

oil, making the skin less able to moisturize itself. As a result, the skin thins out.

It is important to for people to be proactive in their approach to skincare as they age. There are certain strategies to put in place that can make the difference in the appearance and health of the skin.

• **Address dryness.** If the skin is itchy or uncomfortable, or if you find that there is extra flaking, lack of moisture could be a problem.

• **Use sun protection.** The sun is one of the single biggest contributors to unhealthy skin and premature signs of aging.

• **Don't tug or be rough**

on the skin. The skin becomes more delicate and prone to injury as a person ages.

• **Revise makeup shades and products as needed.** As skincare needs change, it pays to go with the flow in terms of the products you use and buy.

• **Drink plenty of water.** Dehydration can increase the risk of injury with regards to the skin, making it more susceptible to dryness and other issues.

• **Experiment with a facial.** Facials can help promote blood flow to the skin and improve the appearance of youth and vitality.

6 Myths Associated With Menopause

At some point in a woman's life she will enter into a period called menopause. Menstruation does not "pause" upon entering menopause. Rather, it ceases to occur from this point on, ending the fertile, reproductive time for females.

Menopause typically begins around age 51. It may be induced through medical intervention at an earlier age.

Women are encouraged to discuss menopause with their healthcare providers so they can better understand their bodies. That's especially important since certain myths about menopause still prevail.

Myth #1: Menopause is a disease. Menopause is an inevitable part of aging. Menopause affects each woman differently.

Myth #2: Menopause happens suddenly. Women do not wake up one day and discover they have entered menopause. Unless menopause results from a hysterectomy procedure or another medical intervention, it should happen slowly over the course of a few years.

Myth #3: Perimenopause eliminates pregnancy risk. A woman is not totally protected from an unplanned pregnancy until a year has passed since her most recent menstrual cycle.

Myth #4: Menopause means gaining weight. Many women gain weight after menopause, and hormonal changes can affect the body's metabolism. However, weight gain can be controlled.

Myth #5: All hormone replacement therapies are the same. It is now believed that women who have had a hysterectomy can take estrogen alone, but those who still have a uterus need progesterone added to protect against endometrial cancer.

Myth #6: Hot flashes are unavoidable. Hormonal shifts trigger hot flashes in many menopausal women. Hot flashes may vary in frequency and intensity depending on the individual.

Menopause can be a confusing time for women, as it involves changes to the body women have not yet experienced. Women can combat that confusion by discussing their symptoms or concerns with their physicians.

How Older Adults Can Reduce Their Risk of Falls

Falls are one of the biggest contributors to fatal and nonfatal injuries among seniors. Such accidents not only threaten safety, but they also can compromise a person's independence. Falls can cause broken bones, impaired mobility and even death.

Falls do not have to be an accepted side effect of aging. With some balance training

and other techniques, older men and women can avoid falls and the injuries that result.

By following these guidelines, individuals can remain safe and upright.

• **Get a vision check-up.**

• **Know your medication side effects.**

• **Begin a regimen of strength training.**

• **Engage in specific**

balance exercises.

• **Try tai chi.** It can improve balance and flexibility.

• **Be aware of posture.**

• **Don't make quick movements.**

Always consult with a doctor before beginning any balance exercises or if you suspect balance issues are stemming from an illness or condition.



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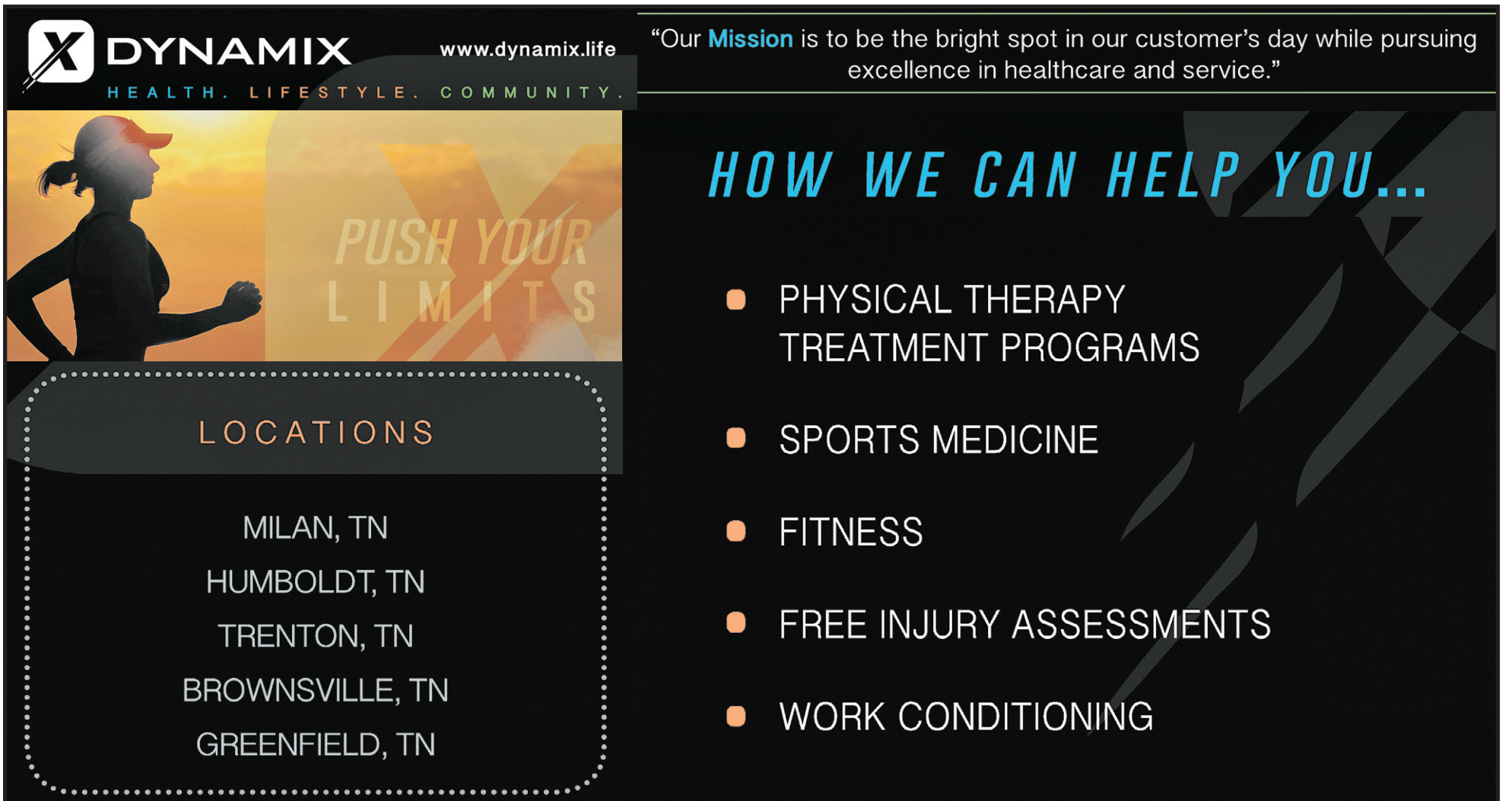
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