

THE TOP HEALTH[®]

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter 5.2016



Mobile Health Apps

At least 20% of U.S. adults use mobile technology to track their health data (mHealth), according to the American Heart Association (AHA). The most popular health apps support boosting exercise, healthy eating, weight management, quitting smoking and controlling blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes.

>>Self-monitoring is a core strategy for changing health behaviors, according to a 2015 AHA Scientific Statement. One example: Mobile phone apps with text messaging designed to help people quit smoking nearly doubled their odds of quitting.

>>Health app choices are very broad and offer programs such as general medical information, symptom checkers, CPR, first aid, mental health coaching and chronic condition managers.

>>Keep in mind that any app may have limitations. For example, apps connecting wearable blood pressure and heart rate tracking monitors to mobile devices need further research. However, the AHA Statement's authors say that apps targeting heart disease risk factors can potentially help you be heart healthy.

>>Before you use mobile health apps, do your research. The American Health Information Management Association recommends safeguarding personal health information by:

1. Reviewing privacy settings on apps and devices.
2. Reading the apps' privacy policies and learning who can access your data.
3. Using lock screen security.
4. Avoiding texting confidential health data.

Your health care provider can also help you choose an app that meets your needs.



National Women's Health Week is May 8 to 14.

The theme: It's never too late to lead a healthier life. First step for everyone: Maintain regular checkups and consult your health care provider about major health changes such as quitting smoking. **National Women's Checkup Day is May 9.** Learn more at WomensHealth.gov.

QuikQuiz™: Food Allergies

Test your knowledge of this condition:

1. True False Food allergies are relatively rare in the U.S.
2. True False Food allergy is an immune system reaction.
3. True False A reaction to food allergy is exclusively digestive.
4. True False Food allergy and asthma rarely occur together.
5. True False Food intolerance is usually less serious than food allergy.

>> Answers on the other side.

May is Food Allergy Action Month.

Got Your Eye on Sunglasses?

Years of exposure to the sun's damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays may contribute to eye and vision problems as you age. Wearing sunglasses can lower your risk for glaucoma, cataracts and macular degeneration.

When choosing sunglasses, you don't need to spend a lot, but you should be picky about the lenses. Here are some guidelines:

UV protection is a must. Both plastic and glass lenses can absorb UV light, which is further blocked by adding certain chemicals to the lens material. However, sunglass makers aren't required to disclose or guarantee 100% UV protection.

For added assurance, the Glaucoma Research Foundation suggests choosing sunglasses labeled as blocking **99-100% of UV rays, or UV absorption up to 400 nm.**

Polarized lenses work well to reduce glare at the beach, on the water and in the snow, but don't guarantee UV protection.

Sunglasses that wrap around your eyes can help block stray UV light. Keep in mind that wraparound glasses can reduce your peripheral vision, and pose a risk especially when driving.

If you already have eye damage, ask your eye care provider for guidance in choosing the most protective lenses.

New Dietary Guidelines

– What You Need to Know

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Vegetables get top marks, sugar should be limited and plant-based eating is encouraged for Americans. Those are the headliners from the new U.S. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines, which are updated every 5 years to reflect evolving nutritional science.



>>The newest version has 5 goals:

1. Follow a healthy eating pattern for life.
2. Focus on variety, nutrient density* and amount.
3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats, and reduce sodium intake.
4. Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.
5. Support healthy eating patterns for everyone.

* Nutrient-dense foods contain a large number of nutrients (e.g., vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, etc.) and relatively few calories.

>>The new guidelines represent a shift from detailed nutrient recommendations to more general eating patterns, which include:

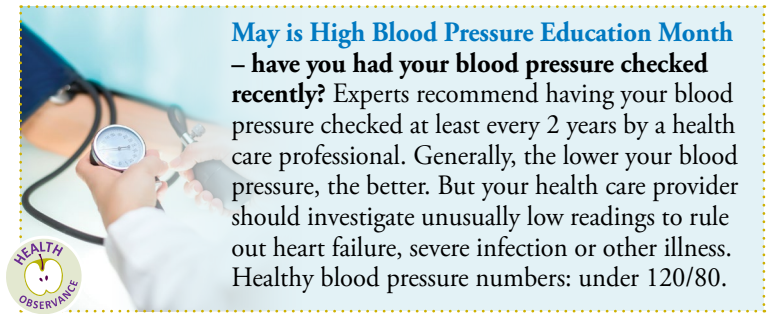
- A variety of vegetables, including legumes.
- Fruits, especially whole fruits.
- Grains (at least half of which are whole grains).
- Fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese and soy beverages.
- Protein-rich foods: seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs, legumes, nuts and seeds.

>>The Guidelines encourage limiting the big 3: **sugar, salt** and **saturated fat**. Per-day recommendations:

1. Consume less than 10% of calories from added sugars.
2. Consume fewer than 2,300 milligrams of sodium.
3. Consume less than 10% of calories from saturated fats.



Steps that will help: Limit processed foods, including soft drinks, candy, pastries, salty snacks, bottled sauces, fried foods, frozen dinners, fatty meats and high-fat dairy. Focus on fresh, whole foods for your best chance at disease prevention, weight management and healthy living.



May is High Blood Pressure Education Month – have you had your blood pressure checked recently? Experts recommend having your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years by a health care professional. Generally, the lower your blood pressure, the better. But your health care provider should investigate unusually low readings to rule out heart failure, severe infection or other illness. Healthy blood pressure numbers: under 120/80.



“But I keep on making what I can’t do yet in order to learn to be able to do it.”

– Vincent Van Gogh

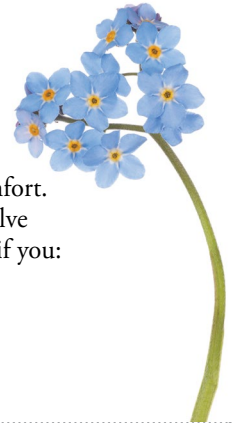
May is Mental Health Month.



Q: Stress-weight gain link?

A: When stressful events trigger anxiety or depression, many of us turn to food for comfort. Food may lift your mood briefly, but it won't solve your problems. You may be an emotional eater if you:

- Crave specific comfort foods.
- Keep eating after you're full.
- Mindlessly binge on unhealthy foods.
- Eat and then feel guilty about it.
- Repeatedly fail in weight-loss attempts.



Fortunately, you can change this pattern. Whenever you feel the urge to eat (but are not truly hungry), identify the preceding thought, emotion or event. Keep a food and mood journal or use an app. Distract yourself: Talk with a friend or take a walk. Try chewing gum or drinking a large glass of water.

In general, exercise daily, take time to relax, socialize and get adequate, quality sleep. – Eric Endlich, PhD

QuikQuiz™ Answers: >> Continued from the other side.



1. **True** – The CDC reports that true food allergies affect only about 4% to 6% of children and 3% to 4% of adults. While there's no cure, many children outgrow their allergies as they get older.

2. **True** – Most food allergies are triggered when the immune system reacts to certain proteins – common in shellfish, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, milk, soy, wheat and eggs – as threats.

3. **False** – Symptoms also may produce skin irritation (itching, rash, hives), respiratory problems (coughing, sneezing, wheezing, shortness of breath) and, in severe cases, anaphylaxis.

4. **False** – They commonly occur together and are more likely to be severe.

5. **True** – Food intolerance, which does not involve the immune system, may be caused by an absence of enzymes needed to fully digest food (such as lactose intolerance), irritable bowel syndrome, food poisoning or stress.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/16V5tools.

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