

TAKE CHARGE!



for health and living

December 2014



Change Your Habits, Change Your Life

Forming healthy lifestyle habits can be daunting.

To make it easier, experts in the art of change suggest these 4 proven strategies:

- 1. Focus on ONE goal at a time.** If you take on multiple objectives, such as eating better, exercising daily and reducing your household debt all at once, you may get overloaded and give up.
- 2. Develop positive thinking.** This habit has the potential to help you form new habits more easily. Work to replace your negative thoughts with those that make you feel good about your action plan and the rewards ahead.
- 3. Make the goal achievable.** Example: Don't commit to running 5 miles a day if you haven't been exercising for years. Start by taking 10-minute walks instead. Have patience.
- 4. Get help.** Take advantage of the experts – your health care provider, a personal trainer, a financial counselor, a tobacco quitline or a support group.

city events

Dealing With My Credit Cards

Tuesday, December 9

12 noon – 12:45 pm

Webinar

Login: See future email flyer*

Free Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, December 17

Stop by between 10:30 & 1:30

SMT 4096

Emotional Intelligence

Thursday, December 18

12 noon – 1:00 pm

Webinar

Registration: See future email flyer*

*Or, call Central Benefits at (206) 615-1340.

Staying Active with Health Challenges

Every day, people with chronic disorders overcome physical limitations to pursue sports and exercise. Don't let your arthritis, heart or lung disease, back pain or other chronic conditions stop you from being active.

Regular exercise can improve your health and quality of life in so many ways, including:

- ✓ Helping you manage and even reverse chronic symptoms.
- ✓ Improving your energy, strength and balance.
- ✓ Helping you control pain and depression.

In fact, exercise is highly recommended for people with chronic conditions to help them restore or maintain health and independence. For example:

Diabetes – Along with weight loss, exercise helps insulin lower your blood sugar. Just being physically active every day may lead to reductions in insulin or medications. — Continued on page 4.



Tip: Aquatic exercise is especially beneficial for people recovering from injuries and for those with arthritis, obesity and asthma. It improves your flexibility, muscles, heart and lungs.

best bits

■ **Clear out the clutter.** This time of year, many people end up receiving more gifts than they can use. Do you have kids' toys, clothes you've outgrown, or gadgets and tools you have barely touched? Give them to a local charity. You'll de-clutter your home and have less stuff to deal with. You'll also make those goods available to someone in need.

■ **A recent study suggests regular physical activity may lower breast cancer risk in postmenopausal women.** Researchers followed more than 59,000 postmenopausal women in France for an average of 8.5 years. Those who walked or cycled for at least 4 hours a week were 10% less likely to be diagnosed with the disease than those who exercised less. **Note:** That protection disappeared if the women stopped exercising. Research into the potential of exercise for cancer risk reduction is ongoing.

“Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live. — Jim Rohn”



QuikRisk™ Assessment: Depression

By Eric Endlich, PhD



A feeling of sadness that persists and interferes with daily life for weeks may indicate depression, a serious but treatable condition. If you are concerned about being depressed, take this assessment. Answer **yes** or **no** to the depression symptoms listed below.

For at least 2 weeks:

Yes No

- 1. I have been feeling sad, empty or hopeless.
- 2. I have lost interest in my favorite activities.
- 3. I have noticed significant changes in appetite or weight (not from dieting).
- 4. I have been thinking about death or suicide.
- 5. I have been unable to concentrate, make decisions or remember details.
- 6. I have felt unusually tired.
- 7. I have been sleeping too much or too little.
- 8. I have been experiencing feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness.
- 9. I have been agitated and restless, or thinking and moving slower than usual.

If you answered **yes** to 5 or more of these questions, seek advice from a health care professional promptly. The sooner you do, the faster you can start feeling better.

Safety + Wellness

Creating a safer living environment protects your mental and physical well-being by reducing your risk of injury and harm.

Two things impact your risk for getting hurt: your behavior and your health. In this sense, personal safety and wellness are closely linked. For example, if you're sleep deprived, you may need to avoid driving or operating machinery, or you risk injury; that's preventive behavior. Or, if you're fit you have less risk of strains or injuries during physical activities; that's prevention through good health.

First step: Stay aware. Your personal safety can be compromised at any time in any environment – whether you're at home, at work, exercising or shopping, you face potential dangers every day.



To improve your safety awareness: Identify specific safety objectives to focus on in your everyday routine – such as avoiding falls by removing tripping hazards or wearing proper safety gear, such as a helmet for sports. Also, study personal safety to learn precautions and stay alert for mishaps.

The more you think safety, the healthier your environment will be, wherever you are.

self care



Help for Head Injuries

body matters

Head injuries are among the most common and dangerous injuries. They can cause serious brain damage. The severity of a blow or jolt to the head may range from a mild concussion with or without brief unconsciousness to severe injury with an extended period of unconsciousness or memory loss, or death.

Common causes of brain injury include falls, being hit by an object (particularly during sports or recreation), motor vehicle crashes and assaults.

Call 9-1-1 if you're concerned. Worrisome symptoms include: shallow breathing, unconsciousness, nausea, vomiting, significant confusion, memory loss, severe head or face bleeding and vision changes.

Heads up:

- Never drive or ride without your seat belt or while under the influence of medication or other substances that can make you drowsy or otherwise impaired.
- Keep your seat belt fastened while flying.
- Wear safety helmets while biking, skating, skiing, snowboarding and during contact sports.
- Make living areas safe from tripping hazards and falling.
- Use non-slip mats and install handrails on both sides of stairways.



Less Stress, More Joy

The holiday season can quickly add to your financial worries and hectic schedule.

Here are some bright ideas on how to lighten your stress and raise your spirits.

Remember that the spirit of giving applies to treating yourself well, too.

Give yourself:

- > **Time to fit in basic daily needs** – that means at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep, 3 balanced meals and 30 minutes of exercise daily.
- > **Choices.** You don't have to do it all; it's OK to say *no* and stay home if that's what will give you the most pleasure.
- > **Help.** Ask others to do extra chores and errands.
- > **More money.** Choose gifts you can afford and that have meaning; otherwise, giving becomes an empty effort.
- > **Relaxation.** Sit down and open your mind and your eyes to the warmth of your surroundings – listen to music, enjoy a wintry walk followed by a cup of hot cider, or simply be with your loved ones.

And give to others. Wear a smile, offer compliments and be patient with those who appear stressed. When a friend or coworker seems upset or blue, lend an ear and just listen.



Cooking Tip: Pineapple

Fast ways to cut fresh pineapple: (a) Slice off crown and bottom.

With pineapple upright, cut the skin off by slicing down the fruit, preserving as much of the fruit as possible. Then slice off the fruit in strips, cutting close to the core; cut into chunks. (b) To make rounds after removing the skin, place the pineapple on its side and begin cutting half-inch slices crosswise; cut out the core of each slice.



eating smart

Empty Calories: What You Need to Know

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

All foods and beverages contain nutrients – that's the term for the carbohydrates, fat, protein, vitamins and minerals in everything you eat and drink. But not all foods contain health-promoting nutrients, so it's important to choose your ingredients wisely.

The term **empty calories** describes foods that are high in calories from sugar and unhealthy fats, and low in nutrients, particularly vitamins and minerals. Examples include soft drinks, candy, chips, ice cream and baked goods, which add calories but little else to your overall diet. Eating a diet high in empty-calorie foods can increase the risk of weight gain, heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Empty-calorie foods tend to be highly processed – here are some examples and healthier alternatives:

| Instead of: | Try: |
|--|--|
| Sugar-sweetened beverage or alcohol | Water or sparkling water with lemon or lime |
| Candy | Fruit |
| Ice Cream | Greek yogurt with fruit or a teaspoon of honey |
| Chips | Air-popped plain popcorn |
| Butter, lard or shortening | Healthful oils: olive, canola, flax, walnut |
| French fries | Baked or roasted potatoes |
| Mayonnaise | Half-the-fat mayonnaise |
| Thick-crust pizza with double cheese and pepperoni | Thin-crust pizza with single cheese and lots of vegetables |
| Fried chicken | Grilled or roasted skinless chicken |

Moderation is key when consuming empty calories.

You can have your cake and eat it, too – once in a while – preferably a small piece following a healthy and balanced dinner. Learn more about eating nutritiously at ChooseMyPlate.gov.



EASY | RECIPE

From Personal Best®

Almond Ambrosia with Coconut

- ½ cup sliced **almonds**
- ½ cup flaked **coconut**
- 4 cups cubed fresh **pineapple**
- 4 cups fresh **tangerine** segments, juice reserved
- 1 large **banana**, halved lengthwise, peeled and cubed
- 2 tbsp fresh **orange juice**

Do ahead: Spread almonds and coconut in a large, hot skillet and toast, stirring frequently until lightly browned, 2-3 minutes. Transfer to a plate and cool.

Gently combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Divide evenly among 12 bowls.

Makes 12 (½ cup) servings. Per ½-cup:

99 calories | 1.9g protein | 3.3g total fat | 1.1g sat fat | 1.4g mono fat | .55g poly fat
| 0mg cholesterol | 11.8g carbohydrate | 9.1g sugar | 3.5g fiber | 11.9mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

Phone: 800-871-9525

Fax: 205-437-3084

E-mail: editor@personalbest.com

Website: www.personalbest.com

Executive Editor: Susan Cottman • Advisors: Eric Endlich, PhD; Cynthia Gale, MS, RD; Mary P. Hollins, MS, JD; Alice Lockridge, MS; Diane McReynolds, past Executive Editor; Zorba Paster, MD; Charles Stuart Platkin, PhD, MPH; Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP • Editorial Assistant: Erin Bishop • Designer: Heather Burke

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News & Notes

Check Your 2015 Benefits. Watch your home mail for your 2015 Annual Benefits Statement in mid-December. Please pay particular attention if you changed benefits or added/removed a dependent. If the Statement doesn't match your written records, contact your department's [benefits representative](#).



Strengthen Your Emotional Well-Being: Want to feel better? Try MyStrength, a new emotional well-being e-portal with interactive programs and tools. Go to www.horizoncarelink.com; login City of Seattle; password City of Seattle. Scroll to page bottom to set up your account.

Verify New Dependent Eligibility: If you enroll a dependent on a medical, dental or vision plan any time during the year, including Open Enrollment, look for a letter in 2 - 4 weeks from Aon Hewitt, the City's business partner. The Aon Hewitt letter will have detailed information on what documents you'll need to provide to verify your dependent's relationship to you and how to submit them. Thanks for your participation!



Give the Gift of Safety

Nothing says you care more than a gift with safety in mind. Take a look at some of these thoughtful gifts.

- ✓ **Prepacked preparedness kit:** This can include several items, such as a battery radio, flares, first aid kit, water, energy bars and flashlights.
- ✓ **Personalized whistle keychain:** Give this to someone who often works late or exercises outdoors alone.
- ✓ **Designer insulated bags:** They're perfect for the fashion diva who wants to keep groceries or a lunch cool to prevent foodborne illness.
- ✓ **Auto safety kit:** A new driver (or even a seasoned one) will appreciate a kit full of emergency gear such as reflectors, jumper cables, salt, flares and a blanket. Buy a prepackaged one or create your own.
- ✓ **Rechargeable car flashlight:** It's convenient and charges in a car outlet.
- ✓ **Backup vehicle camera:** Make life easier for a new driver or anyone who needs a little help backing up or with parallel parking.
- ✓ **Drawer or door baby pinch guards:** These are great stocking stuffers for new parents or grandparents. Prevent little ones from pinching fingers in drawers or doors.



expert advice

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Q: Do I need supplements?

A: Ideally, it's best to get your vitamins and minerals from food. Study after study has shown that food is the richest, most effective and safest source of essential nutrients. But some people regularly fall short of good nutrition.

Talk to your health care provider about whether you need to supplement your diet with specific vitamins or minerals. Groups of people at higher risk for deficiency include:

Heavy drinkers – Vitamin A, vitamin B complex*, vitamin D and vitamin E.

Medication users – Birth control pills may deplete vitamin B₆. Acid blockers and the diabetic drug **metformin** may lower absorption of vitamin B₁₂ and folate. Diuretics lead to loss of potassium, magnesium and zinc.

Poor eaters – Vitamin A, vitamin B complex, vitamin C, calcium, iron and others.

Seniors – Vitamins B₁₂ and D.

Women – Folate, calcium and iron; a prenatal multivitamin is usually advised before and during pregnancy.

Vegetarians – Vitamins B₁₂ and D, calcium and iron.

*Eight vitamins make up the vitamin B complex (including niacin, riboflavin and thiamin).



Staying Active with Health Challenges

Continued from page 1.

Heart disease – With heart-pumping aerobic activities (e.g., brisk walking or swimming), you can lower blood pressure to safer levels and strengthen your cardiovascular system.

Arthritis – Exercise tailored to your affected joints increases range of motion and reduces stiffness. It also strengthens your muscles to help cushion pain and improve mobility.

To get started, your health care provider can advise you about safety precautions and exercise with your condition in mind. You may need to also consult a physical therapist or fitness professional about what exercise types and techniques are appropriate.

Pace yourself. Find out how fast to increase the frequency, duration and intensity of each type of exercise you will be doing.