

TAKE CHARGE!



for health and living

December 2015



take charge

Good Sleep Habits Run in the Family

Modern families face many barriers to getting quality sleep. They're busier and more dependent on smart devices than ever before. While smartphones, tablets and laptops can keep us connected just about anytime, anywhere, this can cut into hours we should spend sleeping.

Ongoing sleep deprivation raises our risk for serious maladies, including type 2 diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease. For children, sleep is critical to brain development and emotional health. Besides poor concentration and performance, sleep-deprived kids are more likely to be depressed, sick or obese and have behavior problems.

Here's how to manage busy lives and still get a good night's sleep for the entire family:

1. Set regular bedtimes and enforce them.
2. Be a role model; practice good bedtime habits.
3. Talk to your child about the importance of sleep.
4. Experts advise removing TVs and all screen devices from bedrooms. Children need to stop using electronic devices at least 1 hour before they go to sleep. The blue light from bright screens can make it harder for adults and children alike to go to sleep.
5. Ask your child's teacher about any related behavior, such as alertness problems or falling asleep in class.
6. Try to ensure that your child's homework and activities can be completed without interfering with the routine bedtime.

Make sleep a priority for the whole family. Together, commit to better sleep and good health.



Get in the Slow Lane

Does your inner voice keep saying, *slow down*? You'd like to, but can't find the time with nonstop deadlines, child care, places to be and people to text. Getting a lot done isn't bad, but feeling constantly rushed is. ➔ Continued on page 4.

city events

Powers of Attorney – Advance Directives

Thursday, December 3
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
SMT 4080

What to Consider Today to Stay on Track in 2016 – Deferred Compensation

Wednesday, December 9
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm
SMT 4080

Emotional Eating

Thursday, December 10
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm Webinar
Login: See future email flyer*

What to Consider Today to Stay on Track in 2016 – Deferred Compensation

Tuesday, December 15
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm
SMT 4080

Free Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, December 16
Stop by between 10:30 & 1:30
SMT 4086

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

Want healthier fast food choices for you and the kids? When you're on the go, fast food is an irresistible convenience. But you may be tempted to overeat. Keep nutrition in mind: Order just a sandwich or burger, and hold the high-calorie extras such as bacon or mayo. For a side, skip the fries and choose fruits or vegetables instead. Replace sweetened drinks with low-fat milk or water. Choose grilled chicken or fish. Request whole-wheat buns and bread.

"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending."
- Maria Robinson



body matters

Neck Pain No More

We're more likely to develop neck strain and pain when we sit or stand for extended periods of time with little movement. Neck pain becomes more common with age and loss of muscle tone, as well as structural wear and tear of the spinal vertebral disks.

Six practical ways to avoid neck strain:

- 1. Don't stay in 1 position too long.** Get up and move about frequently; gently stretch your neck and shoulders. Try to stay aware of your posture.
- 2. Use correct posture at your desk.** Keep your computer monitor at eye level to avoid looking down. Keep your back straight and don't slouch.
- 3. Prop up** your reading material and smart devices to prevent looking down at them.
- 4. Don't cradle the phone between your ear and shoulder.** Wear a headset or use a hands-free phone function.
- 5. Avoid using extra pillows when sleeping.** The added height can cramp your neck's range of motion.
- 6. Sleep well.** Adequate rest protects you from musculoskeletal pains.

First aid for neck strain:

Try 5- to 10-minute cold pack massages within the first 48 hours. Acetaminophen or naproxen can help relieve pain. Don't use them longer than the product directs without consulting your health care provider.

Neck pain is rarely a sign of serious trouble. But if it occurs more often or you have other symptoms such as radiating pain, weakness or numbness of an arm or a leg, see your provider.



Exercise from Your Wheelchair

Needing a wheelchair needn't keep you from enjoying physical activities. In fact, daily exercise is essential. It helps preserve muscle strength so you can move about and complete everyday tasks with greater ease. It reduces your risk for heart trouble, type 2 diabetes, pressure sores and weight gain.

- >>When choosing new activities,** pick those suited to your abilities and personality – from adaptive floor sports and upper body strengthening to DVD workouts and calming yoga sessions. Seek advice from your health care provider; working with a physical therapist expert in wheelchair fitness can help, too.
- >>Be cautious.** Increase your pace, duration and activity level gradually.
- >>Alternate activities.** Variety helps prevent common overuse injuries, particularly shoulder pain or carpal tunnel syndrome.
- >>Stick with it.** Identify and focus on your goals to keep you motivated.
- >>Expect ups and downs.** We all have days when we'd rather skip our exercise – just don't make it a habit.



Learn more at the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (nchpad.org).

QuikQuiz™: Stomach Upsetting You?

The stomach is subjected to many potentially distressing factors. Avoiding triggers can save you a lot of discomfort.

- Common causes of stomach upset, or indigestion, include:
 - Overeating.
 - Stress or anxiety.
 - Drinking alcohol.
 - All of these.
- Indigestion sometimes causes nausea and bloating. True False
- A good way to prevent indigestion is to:
 - Eat smaller, more frequent meals.
 - Reduce or eliminate alcohol.
 - Find alternative medications.
 - All of these.
- Common mild indigestion may be helped by maintaining a healthy weight. True False



ANSWERS:

- d** – Indigestion mostly occurs during or right after eating. Other typical causes include smoking, caffeine, carbonated beverages, antibiotics and pain relievers. Food poisoning and viruses can cause severe stomach upset.
- True** – It most often causes an uncomfortable fullness in the upper belly or abdomen, and may also trigger belching and heartburn.
- d** – Also, eat slowly and avoid heavy, greasy meals.
- True** – Excess pounds put pressure on your abdomen, pushing up your stomach and causing acid to back up into your esophagus. **Tip:** Straighten your posture during and after eating.

Note: Consult your health care provider if indigestion symptoms: become severe or painful; keep coming back or are not relieved by anything you do; or last longer than a day or two. Also call if you develop trouble swallowing, have unexplained weight loss, or have indigestion associated with chest pain or other symptoms of a heart attack.

Say Goodbye to Food Cravings

eating smart

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

It's 3 o'clock and your body longs for chocolate.
Does this craving sound familiar?

Before you indulge, ask yourself if it's true hunger (you haven't eaten in hours) or emotional hunger (you've eaten recently but have a craving). Some people eat to soothe their feelings.



Here's how to tame cravings:



1
Fill up with fiber and protein. High-fiber foods (whole grains, legumes and vegetables) and protein (lean meat, fish and dairy) can reduce cravings by helping you feel full for longer. When you feel full, you yearn less for treats.

2
Don't deprive yourself. If you cut out tempting foods, you may crave them even more. Enjoy small portions of your favorite comfort foods. Moderation is your best ally.

When a craving hits, wait 20 minutes. Food cravings are typically short-lived and may subside if you're distracted. If 20 minutes pass and you're truly hungry, reach for a nutritious snack and a small portion of what you crave.



4
Eat every 3 to 4 hours. Plan ahead for meals and snacks so you won't reach for food high in calories, fat and sugar when you're hungry or rushed. Keep portable, healthy snacks in your bag or car.

5
Break the habit. If you do yearn for chocolate mid-afternoon, try replacing it with an apple and some almonds.



Year-End Assessment

As 2015 comes to a close, it's time to examine your professional development. Not sure how to get started? Consider the following questions:

This year:

- ✓ What new skills did you develop, and how have they helped you?
- ✓ What goals did you set? Did you meet them? Why or why not?
- ✓ What personal qualities, positive or negative, did you bring to your job this year? Examples: honesty, patience, irritability, enthusiasm, persistence, communication, etc. How did they help you or hold you back?
- ✓ Reflect on 1 failure, obstacle or mistake from this year. Describe how it affected you and what you learned from it. What would you do differently next time?
- ✓ Choose 1 success or accomplishment. How did you achieve it? What did you learn?
- ✓ Was this year better or worse than last year overall? Why?
- ✓ What are you looking forward to in 2016?

Stay focused on accomplishing your personal best all year long.

best bites Tip of the Month:

Treat Yourself to Moderation

Holiday time means parties – and lots of food! To enjoy the best tastes of the season, try everything in small amounts. Buffets offer an opportunity to take a few tablespoons (not cups) of each food. *Still hungry?* Fill your plate with more fruits and vegetables, which contain filling fiber, or more protein-rich chicken or turkey.



Festive Pecan and Cranberry Salad

2 tbsp red wine vinegar
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp orange juice
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tsp minced shallot
1 clove garlic, minced

Salt and pepper, to taste
8 cups mixed greens, washed and dried
1/3 cup dried cranberries
1/3 cup pecans
4 oz. goat cheese

EASY | RECIPE

From Personal Best®



In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar, oil, orange juice, mustard, shallot and garlic for the dressing. Add salt and pepper to taste. In a large bowl, toss the mixed greens with the cranberries, pecans and dressing. Transfer to a large serving platter and crumble goat cheese on top.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving (1 1/3 cups):

193 calories | 5g protein | 16g total fat | 4g saturated fat | 9g mono fat | 3g poly fat | 9mg cholesterol | 11g carbohydrate | 6g sugar | 3g fiber | 112mg 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; ; 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

The content herein is in no way intended to serve as a substitute for professional advice. Sources available on request. © 2015 Ebix Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction in any form of any part of this publication is a violation of federal copyright law and is strictly prohibited.

Personal Best® ... A Learning Solution powered by Oakstone®.
2700 Corporate Drive, Suite 100, Birmingham, AL 35242
800-871-9525 • fax 205-437-3084. ♻️ Printed on recycled paper.

News & Notes

▶ **Your 2016 Annual Benefits Statement.** Watch your home mail for your 2016 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, please contact your [department's benefits representative](#).

▶ **Horizon Health EAP's Name Change:** Horizon Health EAP changed its name to *Resources for Living*. The web site is now www.resourcesforliving.name. Your user name (city of seattle) and password (city of seattle) have not changed. Your [Employee Assistance Program](#) benefits are also unchanged. Questions? Please call *Resources for Living* at **1-888-272-7252**, or email Central Benefits at Benefits.Unit@seattle.gov.

▶ **Planning your next trip?** The [Group Term Life](#) and [Accidental Death and Dismemberment](#) plans have travel assistance benefits for you and your covered family members when you travel 100 miles or more from home or internationally for trips up to 180 days. Questions? Call Central Benefits at (206) 684-7832.

top safety 6 Steps for Hand Washing



December 6-12 is National Hand Washing Awareness Week. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers these tips for proper hand washing.

1. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Wash all surfaces including back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails.
3. Rinse well.
4. Turn off tap with a paper towel or an elbow.
5. Dry hands with a towel or an air dryer.
6. Keep clean towels available.



- ▶ **Note:** If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Place on hands and rub together until dry. Hand sanitizers are not as effective in removing all germs, so re-wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you can.

Get in the Slow Lane

➔ Continued from page 1.

During this busy season, give yourself permission to move into the slow lane. Here are 3 simple practices:

Pause. Say you're surrounded by traffic jams, chattering people or noisy crowds – consciously shift your focus from these annoyances to the tangible things around you such as light, air and objects. Observing the stillness of these elements can provide a brief reprieve from rushing thoughts.

Ease off the gas pedal and welcome the calm. Make it a habit.



Retreat. Enjoy timeouts. Take a short walk and breathe in fresh air. Have a quiet lunch or spend a few minutes reading.

Meditate. Try it right now: Take a deep breath and relax your facial muscles. Lower your shoulders and arms, and loosen up your hands and wrists. If seated, uncross your legs or ankles; you'll feel your thighs sinking into your chair, and your calves becoming heavy. Now slowly breathe in and out. You've just activated your relaxation response.

expert advice

– Eric Endlich, PhD

Q: What is OCD?

A: **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** is an anxiety condition in which people suffer from involuntary, upsetting thoughts (obsessions). They attempt to calm themselves by repeating rituals (compulsions), which may provide temporary anxiety relief, but tend to maintain the cycle of obsessions and compulsions.

Common obsessions include fear of contamination or of hurting others; compulsions include excessive hand washing, counting, checking locks and hoarding. These symptoms cause tremendous distress and interfere with daily life or relationships.

OCD usually starts in childhood or teen years, and symptoms may come and go indefinitely if untreated. OCD can run in families and co-occur with other anxiety disorders, eating disorders or depression. People with OCD may avoid situations that trigger their obsessions or turn to drugs or alcohol for relief.

Luckily, OCD can be treated with psychotherapy, sometimes assisted by medications. Support groups, relaxation techniques and self-help methods can also be beneficial.