

TAKE CHARGE!



for health and living

May 2011

nutrition watch

Tips for Cutting Back Salt

The American Heart Association recommends limiting daily salt intake to less than 1,500 milligrams (mg) in order to reduce the risk of high blood pressure, damage to the heart, kidneys and blood vessels — and possibly even obesity. Yet the average person in the U.S. consumes about 3,436 mg per day. While 1,500 mg represents a substantial reduction, cutting down may be easier than you think.



Challenge No. 1: 77 percent of consumed salt comes from packaged, processed and restaurant food.

Pick products with the lowest sodium (salt) content per serving (aim for 140 mg or less) by checking nutritional labels. Choose unsalted, low-sodium and sodium-free items whenever possible. Major sources of sodium include cheese products, tomato sauce or juice, soups, condiments, canned foods, prepared mixes and lunch meats. When dining out, ask for low-sodium menu choices, have salad dressing on the side and ask for little or no cheese.



Challenge No. 2: Medications can be a source of high amounts of sodium.

Scan the ingredients of over-the-counter drugs (such as antacids) for sodium, and look for low-sodium versions. If you use bicarbonate of soda, look for no-sodium versions.

Challenge No. 3: How do I cook without salt?

Choose raw ingredients without added salt, especially when purchasing broth, butter, bouillon, soup, nuts and sauces. Try adding flavor with lemon juice, herbs and spices, hot sauce, onion or garlic powder, flavored oils, pepper, and vinegar instead of salt.



Help is on the way: Some major food manufacturers are responding to the Food and Drug Administration's call to reduce the salt in processed food, making it easier for consumers to limit their sodium intake.

HOME-COOKED MEALS CAN BE QUICK AND HASSLE-FREE. FIND OUT HOW INSIDE. →

City Events

Making the Most of Your Memory

Tuesday, May 10
12 noon – 1:00 pm
SMT Room 4050

Deferred Comp – Asset Allocation

Thursday, May 12
12 noon – 12:45 pm
SMT Room 4080

Deferred Comp – Bond Funds 101

Wednesday, May 25
12 noon – 12:45 pm
SMT Room 4020
Registration Required – call 206-447-1924

Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, May 25
Stop by between 10:30 am & 1:30 pm
SMT 4096

Bike to Work Day — May 20

- Pick up snacks, maps, a water bottle, and get a bike check along the way at stations throughout the region (cbcef.org/btw/btw_day.html). Check the CTR website (sdot/ctr/default.htm) for more information.
- Register for Bike to Work Month at cbcef.org/.
- Find out how you can start commuting to work by bike — call Eric Mamroth at 684-5420.

Are you at risk for high blood pressure?
Take the self-assessment quiz inside. →



in and out: may

Important Finding in HIV Research

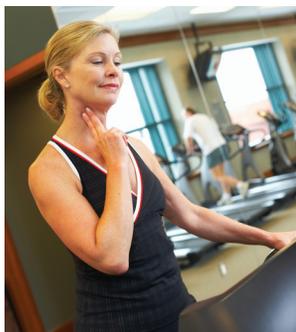
Thirty years have passed since the first patient was diagnosed with HIV. Since then there has also been tremendous progress in AIDS research. The Scripps Research Institute recently announced that they have mapped a key portion of the capsid, an important feature of HIV's ability to infect cells. This discovery may help lead to more effective treatments to prevent HIV infection.

Why Warm-Ups Are Important

Stretching cold muscles can lead to injury. **Warm up first for five minutes with low-impact exercises.** Low-impact warm-ups increase power, flexibility, blood flow and range of motion. Once muscles are "warm," perform dynamic stretching (stretching while moving, such as a slow jog), not static stretching (standing still and stretching), before a heavy workout or game. Some experts suggest motions specific to the sport should be incorporated.



What Does Your Pulse Tell You?



The average adult resting pulse (heart rate) ranges from 60 to 100 beats per minute. Checking your pulse rate at rest, during exercise or immediately after vigorous exercise can give you important information about your overall fitness level. Vigorous exercise conditions your heart, so a lower resting rate generally implies good heart function and better cardiovascular fitness.

LONGEVITY CORNER | Hot Flashes

Hot flashes are a common complaint of women during menopause. The most effective treatment, hormone replacement therapy, has dropped in popularity due to findings that it can increase the risk of heart attacks and stroke. A recent study suggested that medications called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) may reduce hot flashes by 50 percent or more. Other treatments, such as over-the-counter supplements, have shown disappointing research results. If you have hot flashes, consider reviewing the medication options with your health care provider.

— Zorba Paster, MD

Hypertension **QUIKRISK™** ASSESSMENT

Are you at risk for high blood pressure? Get started with this self-assessment.

| Yes | No | |
|-----|----|---|
| 10 | 0 | I'm a man over age 45 or a woman over age 55. |
| 10 | 0 | I am of African descent. |
| 10 | 0 | My family has a history of high blood pressure. |
| 10 | 0 | I am overweight. |
| 10 | 0 | I have diabetes, gout or kidney disease. |
| 10 | 0 | (For women) I take birth control pills. |

| Often | Sometimes | Rarely |
|-------|-----------|--------|
| 10 | 5 | 0 |

I drink more than one alcoholic beverage a day.

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 10 | 5 | 0 |
|----|---|---|

I rarely exercise.

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 10 | 5 | 0 |
|----|---|---|

I eat foods high in saturated and/or trans fats.

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 10 | 5 | 0 |
|----|---|---|

I eat foods high in sodium (salt).

TOTAL SCORE

High Risk: 70-100

Medium Risk: 35-65

Low Risk: 0-30

NOTE: This self-assessment is intended only to raise awareness. See your health care provider for a full evaluation.

..... Doctor's Dictionary

"**Hypertension**," the medical term for high blood pressure, doesn't mean being tense or hyperactive. The "tension" refers to pressure within the blood vessels (arteries), not the nervous system. Even calm, relaxed people can have high blood pressure.

changing needs

Strengthen Your Bones

Bone is living tissue that constantly replenishes itself:

Old bone is reabsorbed into the body while new bone is added. New formation is favored up to about age 30, and then absorption slowly begins to win out. When bone absorption vastly outstrips formation, osteoporosis (“porous bone”) can develop.

Osteoporosis risk factors include the female gender, Asian or Caucasian ethnicity, advancing age, positive family history and a small body frame. **However, the disease can occur without these factors, so everyone should know some key recommendations:**

- 1 **Diet:** Get enough calcium over a lifetime to keep bones strong — check with your physician as to how much. Eat foods that are rich in this mineral: dark leafy greens, low-fat dairy products, salmon and sardines, tofu, almonds, and fortified foods such as cereal or orange juice. Vitamin D, important for calcium absorption, can be obtained from fortified foods or from 15 minutes of daily sun exposure. Some people may need supplements as well.
- 2 **Exercise:** You can strengthen your bones through a variety of weight-bearing exercises — walking, jogging, climbing stairs, weight training, tennis or dance.
- 3 **Potential concerns:** Smokers tend to absorb less calcium from their diets, while regular alcohol use (over 2-3 ounces a day) can damage the skeleton even in young men and women. Though useful, long-term use of some medications (including antacids, thyroid and antiseizure drugs) can also cause bone loss.

New guidelines: Women under age 60 with additional risk factors should be eligible for bone density scans without copays or deductibles.



Know Your Numbers: BLOOD PRESSURE

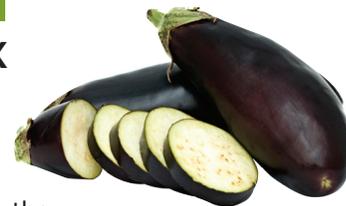
Have you had your blood pressure checked recently? High blood pressure (hypertension) — increases your risk for several conditions, including heart disease and stroke. Prehypertension means you’re likely to develop high blood pressure unless you take steps to control it. **Consider the numbers:**

- 140/90 = high
- 120/80 to 139/89 = prehypertension
- <120/80 = normal



best bites

PRODUCE PICK OF THE MONTH Eggplant



Eggplant stands out in the produce aisle with its glossy purple skin. It’s very lean, yet its “meaty” texture is filling. Rather than frying it or soaking it in oil, try oven roasting a blend of chopped eggplant, onion, bell pepper and tomato with a splash of olive oil.

menu challenge

Goodness From Scratch



Eating home-cooked meals can be a good way to trim fat, sugar and salt from your diet. However, many people find that their hectic schedules leave little time for cooking — but with a little planning and prep work, homemade meals can be quick and hassle-free.

- 1 **Create a recipe repertoire.** Keep cookbooks easily accessible, mark favorite dishes for handy reference or put recipes in a binder with the quickest meals listed first. Get new ideas from library cookbooks and websites such as www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov.
 - 2 **Plan meals in advance.** Make menus for a week or two and generate a list of required ingredients. To save money, plan meals around what’s on sale.
 - 3 **Stock up on staples** such as 100% whole-grain pasta, cereals, bread and rice; canned tomatoes and beans; garlic; onions; low-salt bouillon or stock; eggs; nuts; fresh or frozen produce (some can be steamed in their bags); lean meats; oil; and fresh or dried herbs and spices. Chop fresh herbs and freeze in a small ice cube tray.
 - 4 **Prepare a roasted chicken,** chopped vegetables, fruit salad, soup and a green salad on the weekends. Make healthy snacks to go — try a trail mix of nuts and dried fruit or make muffins. Put fruits on the counter for easy access. **More tips:** Chop and mix omelet ingredients the night before ... remember to defrost items ahead of time ... cook two meals and freeze one or start a crock-pot dish for a hot and tasty dinner.
- ➔ **All aboard:** Designate kitchen roles for each family member — kids can learn good nutrition from the start.

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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THREE CITY WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Spring is a great time to re-commit to a healthier lifestyle. Take your next step by considering these City wellness programs.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: With Horizon Health, you and your household members have up to six in-person counseling visits per issue per year at no cost to you. Services also include financial and legal consultation, child care referral, elder care information and other work/life support. **Contact: 1-888-272-7252; horizoncarelink.com (user name: city of seattle; password: city of seattle).**

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT: You and your adult dependents on a City medical plan can participate in Weight Watchers and receive special pricing for selected services. **Enroll: 1-866-442-1232; more information at personnelweb/content/InWeb/Benefits/pubs/WeightWatchers.PDF.**

TOBACCO CESSATION: Quit for Life is a free quit tobacco program available to you and covered adult dependents. When you call, a Quit Coach can help you set a quit date and decide if free nicotine replacement therapy is right for you. **Enroll: 1-866-784-8454; see details at quitnow.net.**

Break-Time Snack Mix

EASY | RECIPE

from Personal Best®

1 cup corn cereal squares
1 cup almonds, unsalted
1 cup pumpkin seeds, unsalted
1 cup dried cranberries

½ cup raisins
½ cup dried apricots, chopped
½ cup shelled pistachio nuts, unsalted

- 1] Toss all ingredients together in a large bowl.
- 2] Refrigerate in tightly sealed baggies.



MAKES 5 CUPS (20 servings). Per ¼-cup serving:

139 calories | 4g protein | 8.4g fat | 1g sat fat | 0mg cholesterol
14.7g carbs | 9g sugar | 2.5g fiber | 14mg sodium

Tips for Allergy Relief

Allergies can be particularly ferocious in the spring. In an allergic person, pollen forces an antibody counterattack, triggering the miserable symptoms of hay fever, or allergic rhinitis. Symptoms include runny, itchy eyes and nose; watery, clear nasal discharge or congestion; repeated sneezing; and unusual fatigue. Ask your health care provider about prescription or over-the-counter symptom relievers. **Then try to identify and minimize exposure to your allergens:**

Limit time outdoors on dry, windy days, when pollen counts are high.

Leave yard work to others.

Shower before bedtime to prevent transferring allergens to bedding.

Wash clothes worn outdoors before wearing them again.

Vacuum and mop often. (Hardwood floors are preferable to rugs.)

Keep pets out of bedrooms.

Close all windows in your home and car; run the air conditioner.

Avoid alcohol use, which increases nasal congestion.

Avoid tobacco smoke and other irritants such as perfume, hair spray and laundry detergent.

Visit the National Allergy Bureau website for your local pollen count: www.aaaai.org/nab/index.cfm?p=pollen.

There is no cure for allergies, but you can take some steps to get relief and enjoy the spring!

last bites

Three Ways to Boost Memory

Do you forget things? You're not alone. It's estimated that the average American spends a full year over the course of a lifetime looking for misplaced objects. Here's how to keep your memory razor sharp:

1 Take a picture. To better remember where you've left something, like your car keys, pretend to hold a camera to your eyes, focus on the object and click the image into your memory.

2 Think like a poet. Make up rhymes to recall ideas and construct simple-to-remember acronyms to record key phrases. You'll make remembering EASY ... Every Acronym Saves You.

3 Put it in writing. Take notes, make lists or set up automatic email reminders.



Recommended: Make a daily list of what you can't afford to forget and carry it with you.