

# TAKE CHARGE!



for health and living

May 2013



## Meet the Mediterranean Plate

The **Mediterranean Diet** is a way of eating based on the traditional foods of countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. People in this region tend to practice the cornerstones of healthful eating: Make nutrition a priority, avoid processed foods, and prepare meals with fresh, local ingredients. They also make time to dine together with family and friends.

Ancel Keys, a pioneer in cholesterol research, was the first scientist to promote the Mediterranean Diet in the U.S. after seeing its health effects among people in postwar southern Europe. Since then, studies have consistently shown that this plan aids weight loss and reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

**What makes the Mediterranean Diet so effective?** It pairs taste appeal with healthful ingredients in easy ways. Start with fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains. Add olive oil, fish and seafood, and a little poultry, eggs and cheese for a diet filled with nutrients and fiber, as well as heart-friendly monounsaturated and omega-3 fats.

**What's on the Med Diet shopping list?** Ingredients include olive oil, beans, steel-cut or rolled oatmeal, fresh fruits and vegetables, and yogurt, to name a few. You can download a complete list at <http://oldwayspt.org/resources/shopping-cooking-eating/stocking-your-kitchen>: Look for the Mediterranean Diet Shopping List.

**For an effortless Mediterranean meal,** grill fish after marinating in a vinaigrette of citrus juice, garlic and olive oil. Or have whole-wheat pasta tossed with fresh, garlicky tomato sauce. Always serve a simple plate of tossed greens. *Note:* Always get your health care provider's OK before significantly changing your eating plan.



May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month.



## asthma Decoded

People with asthma can be sensitive to many things that can make breathing difficult, and sometimes severe enough to require emergency treatment.

**Allergic asthma** is the most common type of asthma. Symptoms occur by inhaling allergens, such as pollen, dust mites and animal dander. Once these allergens get into your airways, your immune system overreacts, causing your airways to tighten and become inflamed.

**Non-allergic asthma** is triggered by factors such as polluted air, stress and exercise that do not involve the immune system.

➔ Continued on page 4.

## city events

### Coping with Personal Loss Webinar

Wednesday, May 8  
12 noon - 1:00 pm  
Registration: See flyer\*

### Mutual Funds – Deferred Comp.

Thursday, May 16  
12 noon – 12:45 pm • SMT 4080

### Dealing with Burnout Webinar

Tuesday, May 21  
12 noon – 1:00 pm  
Registration: See flyer\*

### Portfolio Review/Account Statement – Deferred Comp.

Wednesday, May 22  
12 noon – 12:45 pm • SMT 4020  
Register at 206-447-1924

### Free Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, May 29  
Stop by between 10:30 & 1:30  
SMT 4096

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



### Bike to Work Day – Friday, May 17

- Register for Bike to Work Month at [cbcef.org/btw/cc.html](http://cbcef.org/btw/cc.html)
- Pick up snacks, maps, a water bottle, and get a bike check along the way
- You can start commuting to work by bike – mail Eric Mamroth at [ctr@seattle.gov](mailto:ctr@seattle.gov)



**More Choice!** Look for healthy snack options in City vending machines starting this summer....



### Long-Term Care Insurance enrollment

will be unavailable after June 30, 2013. Interested? Talk to Prudential at 800-732-0416. Enroll at [prudential.com/glwcweb/seattle](http://prudential.com/glwcweb/seattle).



# When Worrying Hurts



**Worrying about important things such as family, health or money is normal.** Worry can be productive if it helps you resolve matters that need attention. The time to worry about worrying is when it becomes chronic anxiety that seriously interferes with your everyday life.

**This level of fear and worry may be diagnosed as generalized anxiety disorder if:**

- You have ongoing excessive worry, fear or tension that you cannot control.
- You know your fears are irrational but you can't change your thinking.
- Your anxiety interferes with your work, school, relationships or responsibilities.
- You are usually tired and sleep poorly.
- You often feel tense, nervous, shaky or sweaty.
- You have trouble relaxing or concentrating.



**The cause of generalized anxiety disorder is unclear but may involve:**

**Brain chemistry** – Abnormal levels of brain neurotransmitters may alter the mind's perception of things.

**Stress or trauma** – Painful or distressing events, such as abuse, divorce or the death of a loved one, may trigger persistent anxiety.

**Genetics** – Anxiety disorders tend to run in families.

If you've experienced some of the signs listed above for several months, it's time to see your health care provider for help. Treating anxiety disorders usually includes medication, psychotherapy, or both.

*Practical ways to lessen your symptoms:* Avoid caffeine and alcohol. Before taking any new medication, ask your pharmacist or provider if it might contribute to anxiety. Seek counseling after a traumatic experience. Exercising daily and practicing stress-control techniques such as yoga or meditation are helpful.

May is High Blood Pressure Education Month.



## For Better Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is a primary risk factor for heart disease and stroke. A third of Americans have high blood pressure (HBP), and more than half of them do not have it under control.

### Factors that impact blood pressure:

**Medication:** Most patients are prescribed medication to help control their HBP. If your BP is not under control or you have side effects from your medicine, see your health care provider without delay.

**Weight:** One of the easiest ways to lower BP is weight loss. People who shed just a few pounds are often able to avoid medication or reduce the dose.

**Exercise:** Exercising 30 to 60 minutes 3 to 4 days a week can significantly decrease moderately elevated BP. In fact, regular exercise may lower BP as much as medicine. Note: Get your provider's approval before significantly increasing your exercise routine.

**Emotional stress:** It makes your arteries constrict and your blood pressure rise temporarily. Chronic anger, anxiety and depression can damage your blood vessels, heart and kidneys in ways that raise your risk for long-term HBP.

**Snoring:** The *Journal of Sleep Medicine* (10/15/12) reported that men who use CPAP therapy for obstructive sleep apnea (severe snoring) had significant sustained decreases in BP readings. (CPAP stands for continuous positive airway pressure. Mild air pressure is used to keep the airways open during sleep.)

*Keep watch on your blood pressure.* It can also quickly improve by addressing the factors noted above.



## Beat That Tired Feeling



**In today's busy world, "I'm tired all the time" is a common complaint.**

Don't just sit there yawning. Take steps to renew your energy:

▶ **Get moving.** You might think exercise will make you more tired, but research shows people who exercise regularly feel less fatigued than those who are sedentary. Aim for at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity (walking, swimming) most days of the week to shake off sleepiness.

▶ **Get some sleep.** It sounds simple — if you're tired, sleep more. However, many of us sacrifice sleep to do more. Adopt good sleep habits to reduce fatigue. Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed. Plus, turn off the television, your phone and other devices. "Screen time" before bed can keep you awake, research shows.

▶ **Rule out physical causes.** Persistent tiredness is sometimes a sign of a health problem, such as diabetes, anemia, allergies, depression or a sleep disorder. If fatigue persists no matter how much rest you get or what measures you take, talk with your health care provider.



top fitness

## Go Row

### Indoor rowing is making a comeback.

With upgraded technology and styling, stationary rowing machines offer a new trend in cardio workouts. Here are some basics.

#### ■ First, rowing is easy for most people.

If you're overweight or unable to perform other types of exercise, you may find rowing a comfortable option. It's low impact and may be a safe exercise during rehabilitation from injury or if you have lower-body joint problems. But check with your health care provider first, especially if you have a weak back.

#### ■ Rowing provides a total body workout.

Besides strengthening your cardiovascular system, rowing works several muscle groups, especially the upper thighs, buttocks, shoulders, back, upper arms and the all-important core muscles. And like any vigorous aerobic exercise, it burns fat, oxygenates muscle tissue and reduces stress.

#### ■ Learn the proper rowing technique.

Poor form makes the workout less effective and may lead to injury. Search for DVDs that illustrate proper indoor rowing technique. Start out slowly using low resistance until you become accustomed to the movements. Then increase speed, resistance and length of your workout gradually.

Before investing in a rower, try out the different types of machines to make sure indoor rowing feels right for you.



Produce Pick of the Month: **Asparagus**

Try quick roasting →



## Cooking With Oil?

Learn about smoke points.

nutrition watch

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Dietary fat is an essential part of a balanced diet. When it comes to your health, some fats are better than others. Cooking oils, for example, are lower in saturated fat than solid fats, such as lard or butter, making them good choices for your heart.

Oil is most beneficial when it's consumed in moderation. For most healthy people, the daily oil allowance is 1 to 2 tablespoons depending on age, gender and physical activity level.

Choosing the right oil for each cooking method is often tricky. It helps to know the oil's **smoke point** – the temperature at which oil begins to break down when heated. At this point oil can smoke, develop a heavy flavor and lose nutritional value. Following is a guide for matching some oils to common cooking methods.



### Oils with a high smoke point of more than 445°F

are suitable for hot cooking such as sautéing, frying, roasting and grilling. These oils include:

- Sunflower
- High oleic safflower and canola
- Corn
- Peanut



### Oils with a mid-range smoke point from 360°F to 425°F

are suitable for culinary uses such as sautéing at medium-high heat. Plus, their neutral flavors make them suitable for baking:

- Canola
- Walnut
- Soybean



### Some oils, including extra virgin olive and sesame, are best when heated at a very low temperature (no more than 350°F).

Plus, their robust flavors add richness to sauces and salad dressings. You also can use them as finishing oils on sautéed vegetables, pasta or salads. *Note: Flax and hemp oils are unsuitable for heat and should only be used cold.*

## Roasted Asparagus

Quick roasting brings out the best in this popular vegetable. Choose asparagus with tightly closed tips and no flowering.

- 1 bunch **asparagus** (about 1 lb)
- 2 tbsp **red wine vinegar**
- 2 tbsp **orange juice**
- 1 tbsp **peanut oil**
- 1 tsp **Dijon mustard**
- Pinch of **garlic powder**
- Freshly ground **black pepper**

Snap off tough ends of asparagus. Mix remaining ingredients and combine with asparagus in a large plastic bag; seal and marinate for 30 minutes. Roast in preheated 410 °F oven for 10 minutes or until fork tender, depending on thickness of spears.

From Personal Best®



### MAKES 4 SERVINGS. Per Serving:

51 calories | 1.9g protein | 3.5g total fat | .4g sat fat | .8g mono fat | 2.2g poly fat | 0.0mg cholesterol | 4.3g carbs | 1.6g sugar | 1.8g fiber | 32mg sodium

## Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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# news & notes

Spring is a great time to start a healthier lifestyle. Take your next step:

- **Employee Assistance Program:** You and household members have up to six in-person counseling visits per year at no cost to you. Services also include financial and legal consultation and other work/life support. Contact: 1-888-272-7252; [horizoncarelink.com](http://horizoncarelink.com) (user name: city of seattle; password: city of seattle).
- **Weight Management:** You and adult dependents on a City medical plan can participate in Weight Watchers and receive special pricing. Enroll online at [wellness.weightwatchers.com](http://wellness.weightwatchers.com) with Employer ID: 62344, Employer Passcode: WW62344. Include the participant's date of birth (no leading zeroes, separated by slashes; e.g. 7/3/1956); more information at [seattle.gov/personnel/benefits/wellness/physical.asp](http://seattle.gov/personnel/benefits/wellness/physical.asp).
- **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](http://quitnow.net).



There's no doubt about it — yard and garage sales hold great deals for bargain hunters, but don't get more than you bargained for.

- **Pay attention to product recalls.** Used items may have had product recalls. Check with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) at [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov) for a list of product recalls before you purchase.
- **Don't buy car seats.** In addition to product recalls, the car seat may have been in a crash, compromising its safety. When it comes to protecting your baby, safety rules over bargains.
- **Don't buy helmets.** Helmets are meant for 1 impact and even if it looks perfect, a helmet's safety may have been compromised.

● **Be aware of lead paint.** While that chipped antique box might have the trendy look you're searching for, it might also have lead paint, which is known to cause brain damage as well as other ailments. Even inhaling the dust from these items could cause harm.

● **Watch out for creepy crawlies.** Lice, bed bugs and other nasty creatures can hide in linens, upholstery or clothes. Inspect all items carefully before buying and taking home.

● **Don't go in alone.** If you see an ad for a yard sale and it's in a remote area or inside a home, either don't go or attend with a few other people.



expert  
advice

By Elizabeth Smoots,  
MD, FAAFP

## Q: Breastfeeding benefits?

**A:** Most health experts highly recommend breastfeeding for new moms. Both babies and mothers receive numerous health benefits. Consider the advantages of breastfeeding:

Breast milk's composition adjusts to a growing infant's needs. At any developmental stage, it contains just the right mix of fat, carbohydrate, protein, water and other nutrients.

Infants can digest breast milk more easily than formula. Nursing gives them infection-fighting antibodies and other substances that help prevent colds, allergies, asthma and other childhood diseases. Breastfed babies also have a lower risk of sudden infant death syndrome.

For mothers, nursing provides time to bond and make physical contact with their babies. More benefits for nursing moms: They may miss less work since their infants tend to be sick less often; they often lose weight easier after delivery; and they have a lower risk of depression, diabetes and breast and ovarian cancer.

## Asthma Decoded → Continued from page 1.

Both allergic and non-allergic asthma share these common irritants:

- Smoke from tobacco and fires
- Dust and air pollution
- Strong chemical odors or fumes
- Perfume, air fresheners or other scented products

The symptoms of both allergic and non-allergic asthma are generally the same and may include shortness of breath, rapid breathing, coughing, wheezing and chest tightening.

### Best ways to manage asthma:

- 1. Learn to avoid your asthma triggers.** For instance, maybe you can improve indoor air by eliminating tobacco smoke or chemical odors. If you have asthma, you should not smoke.
- 2. Take your medication properly.** Asthma medicines provide emergency relief and long-term control.

Follow a care plan developed by you and your health care provider. Don't let asthma restrict your breathing — and your life.