

TAKE CHARGE!



for health and living

November 2013



take charge

city events

Emotional Eating: The Food/Mood Connection – Part I
Wednesday, November 6
 12 noon – 1:00 pm SMT 4050

Depression in Families
Tuesday, November 19
 12 noon – 1:00 pm Webinar
*Registration: See future email flyer**

Active vs. Passive Investing – Deferred Compensation
Thursday, November 21
 12 noon – 12:45 pm SMT 4080

Women & Investing: Calculate Total Retirement – Deferred Compensation
Wednesday, November 27
 12 noon – 12:45 pm SMT 4020
 Register at 206-447-1924

Free Blood Pressure Screening
Wednesday, November 27
 Stop by between 10:30 & 1:30
 SMT 4096

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

Can You Live Without Tobacco?

Breaking free of tobacco is a great achievement. For people who use it, tobacco becomes a very big part of their lives. So it takes a lot of physical and mental stamina to quit for good.

If you long to be free of tobacco, why not start now? The first step is to meet with your health care provider. Nicotine addiction is a chronic illness, and your provider will guide you through the cessation period. Discuss the multiple aids available to help you quit, including:

Nicotine replacement aids: The nicotine patch, gum, lozenge, nasal spray and inhaler help ease the physical symptoms of nicotine withdrawal.

Non-nicotine medicine: Two non-nicotine drugs, *bupropion* and *varenicline*, help reduce nicotine cravings.

Take a deep breath, and take the first step – on **November 21, the Great American Smokeout**, say *I quit*. *Everyone loves a quitter.*



November is Diabetes Month.

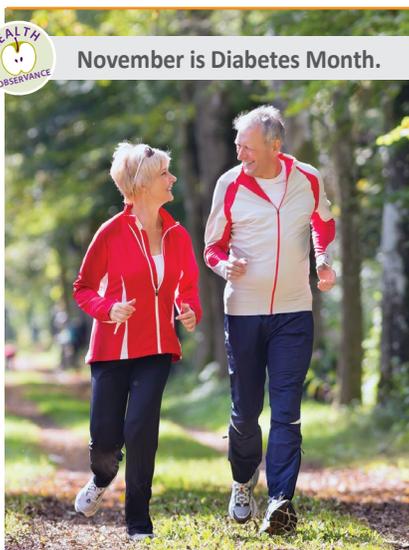
Blood Sugar Basics

Your body's main source of energy is the glucose or sugar in your blood. To help maintain a healthy blood glucose level, your body needs to properly use the hormone insulin. Without that control, you may develop type 2 diabetes, a disorder that can cause serious health problems.

Borderline diabetes is called prediabetes – it's diagnosed when blood glucose levels are moderately high but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Having prediabetes is a wake-up call. However, you may not have any symptoms, so it's best to learn the risk factors:

- Excess weight, especially belly fat
- High blood pressure
- HDL cholesterol under 35

➔ Continued on page 4.



Two steps may cut your diabetes risk. Turn to page 4 ➔

New Roth (After Tax) Contribution Option – Deferred Compensation

Tuesday, November 12
 12 noon – 12:45 pm
 SMT 4020
 Register at 206-447-1924

Thursday, November 14
 12 noon – 12:45 pm
 SMT 4080

Tuesday, November 19
 12 noon – 12:45 pm
 SMT 4080

Wednesday, November 20
 12 noon – 12:45 pm
 SMT 4080





Cold and Flu Rescue

How much do you know about those common upper respiratory illnesses – colds and flu? Here's an overview:

Symptoms: Cold and flu generally cause coughing, congestion, sore throat and unusual fatigue to some degree. Flu symptoms may start quickly, are more severe and often include fever, headache and muscle aches. The flu can last for days or weeks, while a cold can be kicked in a few days.

Treatment: Antiviral prescription medications may help relieve the flu if taken soon after symptoms start. For cold and flu, try over-the-counter symptom relievers such as medicated nasal spray or decongestants; pain relievers and fever reducers; and dextromethorphan for cough. The best remedy: Sleep longer than normal or stay in bed for at least a day.

Call your health care provider

if you have persistent fever, coughing, congestion, trouble breathing, sore throat, or pain in your ear, glands, neck or sinuses. The flu can lead to pneumonia and other complications.

Stay home if you have a fever, are in the early days of a virus (when you're most contagious), are coughing and sneezing a lot, or have diarrhea.

Get the flu vaccine. It is recommended for virtually everyone past age 6 months.

To prevent infection, avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth, and wash your hands after touching items used by others.



top fitness



Get Past Your Weight-Loss Plateau

You've started exercising and eating right with great results. Then, after a few months, your body reaches a plateau and you stop losing weight.

Why? One theory: After performing the same activity for long periods, your body uses fewer calories than when you first started the activity, and it's harder to lose weight. To reach your goal weight, you need to continually update your fitness routine. Here are some tips:

> Boost your cardio workout.

Add brief intervals of higher-intensity exercise during your routine moderate workout. For example, speed walk for 5 minutes every 10 minutes during your walk.

> Add 2 to 3 strength-training workouts a week.

Strength building increases your muscle density and metabolism. Increasing your lean muscle mass will ultimately help you lose both fat and inches.

> Vary your exercise activities.

Regularly using a variety of muscles adds muscle mass, which raises your metabolism. Beyond the same old machine workout, for example, try swimming or racket sports.



body matters

Love Your Skin



November is National Healthy Skin Month – time to take a good look at your skin. Does it feel dry and itchy this time of year? Increased exposure to dry air and less indoor and outdoor humidity can cause dry skin. Here's what dermatologists advise to keep your skin healthy.



• **When bathing:** Take shorter showers or baths, and use warm water. Close the bathroom door to trap moisturizing steam. Use gentle cleansers. After patting your skin dry, apply moisturizer immediately to hold in moisture from bathing.



• **Moisturizers:** Ointments and creams are less irritating than lotions. Ingredients that help soothe dry skin include olive, jojoba and mineral oils, shea butter, lactic acid, hyaluronic acid and glycerin. Avoid skin care products that contain alcohol or fragrance.

• **More tips:** Wear gloves outdoors in cold weather. Glove up to perform tasks that involve getting hands wet or exposed to harsh cleansers. Plug in a room humidifier to moisturize indoor air.



See your health care provider if dry skin becomes irritated or bothersome.

How Helping Others Helps You

If you're looking to boost your mental and physical health, you can't beat offering your time and skills to others. Become a volunteer! Besides the good feeling that comes from giving to others, you may also:

- ✓ Meet and network with new people.
- ✓ Learn a new skill or discover a talent.
- ✓ Share what you know with others.
- ✓ Gain experience that will enhance your career.
- ✓ Feel more confident and proud.
- ✓ Reduce your risk of depression, heart disease and other ailments.
- ✓ Live longer.
- ✓ Feel a renewed sense of self-worth.
- ✓ Make your community stronger.
- ✓ Share special times with family and friends.
- ✓ Improve someone else's life.



Find the right fit. You can find volunteer opportunities right in your community. Check with your local hospital, school, community center, service organization, or religious organization. You can also visit www.volunteer.gov for more information.

best bites

Produce Pick of the Month: Fresh Green Beans

Fresh green beans are generally available year-round – look for those that are bright green, firm and truly fresh. They're also called string beans because of the fibrous strand along their seam, which you may want to remove before cooking. You can quickly steam or sauté them with a little olive oil. Either way, they're a rich source of fiber and nutrients.



By Cara
Rosenbloom, RD

nutrition watch



3 Nutrients: Are You Getting Enough?

What's the best way to ensure your body is properly nourished? The first step is to choose unprocessed, nutrient-rich whole foods – think vegetables, fruit, whole grains, dairy, fish, legumes, poultry and lean meat. However, even the best diet can fall short of certain key nutrients. These include iron, vitamin D and calcium.

> **Iron** deficiency is most common in women, children and teenage girls.

Solution: Iron is found in foods that come from both animals and plants, but animal-based iron sources are better absorbed by the body. If you prefer a plant-based diet, match iron-rich foods (leafy greens, legumes, nuts) with items that are high in vitamin C. For example, try spinach and strawberry salad or sweet pepper and kale stir-fry.

> **Vitamin D** may protect against osteoporosis, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and certain types of cancer. But since this vitamin is found in few foods, deficiency is common.

Solution: Drinking fortified milk daily and eating a few servings of fish weekly are helpful, but may not be enough. Discuss your vitamin D status with your doctor, and consider supplements if your level is low.

> **Calcium** is a mineral crucial to keeping your bones healthy. In the U.S., teenage girls and adults older than age 50 are most likely to fall short of their calcium needs.

Solution: Include 3 to 4 servings of milk products in the diet each day. Try milk, low-fat cheese and yogurt. If you don't enjoy dairy, get calcium from leafy greens, canned salmon or sardines, and fortified milk alternatives.

Garlicky Green Beans

EASY | RECIPE

From Personal Best®

¼ cup sliced **pecans**
 2 tbsp **olive oil**
 1 pound **green beans**,
 cut into 2-inch pieces
 1 tsp minced **garlic**
 ½ pound **cremini mushrooms**,
 thinly sliced
 ¼ tsp **sea salt**
 Fresh ground **black pepper**,
 to taste
 ¼ cup minced **red bell pepper**

1. Heat a large, deep skillet over high temp. Add pecans, stirring frequently until fragrant and lightly browned, 2-3 minutes. Remove from skillet and set aside.
2. Heat oil in skillet over medium temp; sauté green beans with garlic 3-4 minutes.
3. Stir in mushrooms, salt and pepper. Continue sautéing, stirring frequently, until vegetables are tender, 6-8 minutes.
4. Spoon onto a platter and sprinkle with pecans and bell pepper.

MAKES 5 (1-cup) SERVINGS. Per serving:

146 calories | 8g protein | 8.3g total fat | 1.1g sat fat | 4.6g mono fat | 1.7g poly fat
 | 0.0mg cholesterol | 13.3g carbohydrate | 5.1g sugar | 5.5g fiber | 130.1mg 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; Designer: Heather Preston Burke

The content herein is in no way intended to serve as a substitute for professional advice. Sources available on request. © 2013 Oakstone Publishing, LLC. 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.

City of Seattle health and wellness. Discover these programs.

➔ **Celebrate the Great American Smokeout.** Quit for Life is a free quit tobacco program available to you and adult covered dependents. Enroll: 1-866-784-8454. More information at quitnow.net.

➔ Concerned about high blood pressure? Diabetes? City employees and adult dependents can **participate in Weight Watchers** and receive special pricing for selected services. Enroll at wellness.weightwatchers.com. Employer ID 62344; Employer Passcode: WW62344. Information at seattle.gov/personnel/benefits/home.asp.

➔ Need help with life issues? You and your household members have up to six in-person counseling visits per issue per year at no cost through the **Employee Assistance Program**. Call: 1-888-272-7252. More resources: www.horizoncarelink.com (city of seattle; city of seattle).



top safety



Take a Walk

Does Stress Affect Safety?

We know that stress affects our health, but what about our safety? When you are stressed, your body and your mind react. Symptoms of stress can range widely, but some include anxiety, frustration, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, poor judgment and memory lapses that can translate into burnout (neglecting responsibilities) and injuries and other mishaps on the job.

If you feel stressed, here are some things you can do:

Walk during your break or lunch hour to get away from your surroundings.

Take up yoga or meditation.

Make sure you get 7 to 9 hours of sleep every night. Not getting enough sleep can make it harder to cope with stressful situations.

Breathe deeply. Inhale for a count of 10 and exhale for a count of 10. You may have to work up to 10.

Talk to a professional counselor or seek help through your company's Employee Assistance Program.

Blood Sugar Basics

➔ Continued from page 1.

- Lack of exercise
- Family history of diabetes
- History of diabetes during pregnancy
- Ethnic background (African, Hispanic, Native or Asian American, Pacific Islander)

When should you be tested? If you're **over age 45**, ask your health care provider during a routine visit if you need a blood glucose test. If you're **younger than 45** and have any of the risk factors listed above for diabetes and prediabetes, ask your provider about testing.

These 2 steps may cut your diabetes risk by half:

1. Lose 7% of your body weight (that's 14 pounds if you weigh 200).
2. Exercise moderately (such as brisk walking) 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

Even if you can't get to your ideal body weight, losing just 10 to 15 pounds can improve your body's use of insulin – the key to healthy blood sugar.



expert advice

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Q: Who needs hepatitis C screening?

A: The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the CDC have updated their hepatitis C screening guidelines to include recommending a one-time blood test for adults born from 1945 to 1965 – members of the baby boom generation.

Besides baby boomers, hepatitis C screening is also recommended for people who:

- Ever used an illegal injectable drug.

- Were treated for a blood clotting problem before 1987.
- Received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before July 1992.
- Were on long-term hemodialysis treatment.
- Were exposed to another person's blood through a needlestick or sharp object injury.
- Are infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- Have abnormal liver tests or liver disease.

People with the factors listed above are at increased risk for hepatitis C.