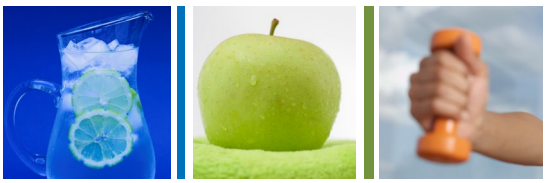
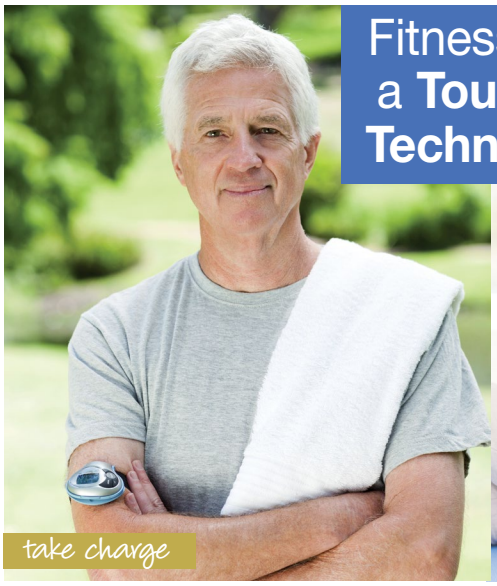
City of Seattle

TAKE CHARGE!

for health and living

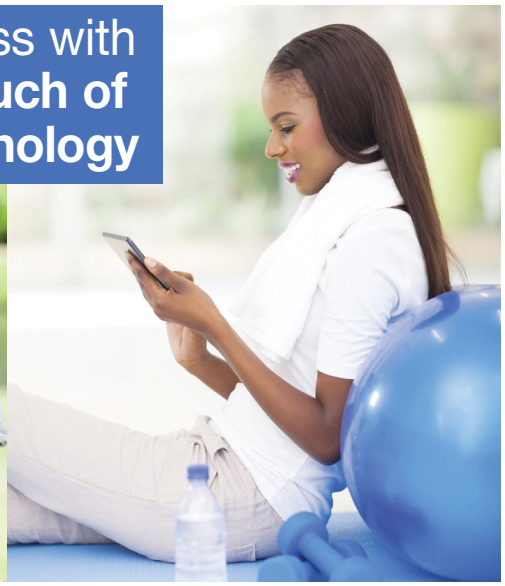
October 2014





take charge

Fitness with a Touch of Technology



Fitness trackers have come a long way since the first heart rate monitors and clip-on pedometers appeared decades ago. Today you can track your fitness progress with much smarter wearable devices and their companion mobile apps.

Most of these devices are small and are worn around your wrist or neck or easily clipped to a pocket. They typically track calories burned and activity or step distance and time, as well as your heart rate and sleep patterns.

Many units connect to your computer or smartphone and automatically collect, sync and display your health data.

Study and shop before you buy. Try to view a demonstration of the various functions to identify those you'll use. You might start simple, with the option to upgrade.

Now, with your high-tech gadget, you can incorporate more activity into each day – walking, cardio workouts, online videos, or a DVD of your favorite exercise program.

Physical Therapy: Back to Active

health in action

Physical therapy (PT) is a treatment your health care provider may recommend for healing injuries or improving your ability to move better. Physical therapists use exercise, treatment modalities (such as ultrasound) and manual therapy to treat many conditions including joint and spinal disabilities as well as rehabilitation from surgery and stroke.

People of all ages benefit from physical therapy in private practices, outpatient clinics, home health agencies, schools, sports and fitness facilities, work settings and nursing homes.

The keys to PT success:

- Understand what to expect from your treatment, step by step.
- Stay patient with therapy; it can be slow and gradual.
- When in doubt, talk with your physical therapist or other health care provider to be sure you're progressing.

➡ Continued on page 4.

Reach your personal best with Smart Moves at *www.personalbest.com/extras/Oct14tools*.

city events

Open Enrollment October 6 - 31

Benefits Fairs & Flu Shots

Thurs., October 9, 9:30 am – 2:30 pm
City Hall – Bertha K. Landes Rm.

Thurs., October 16, 7:30 – 10:00 am
Rainier Community Center

Thurs., October 23, 7:30 – 10:00 am
Bitter Lake Community Center

Dealing With Back Pain

Wednesday, October 1
12 noon – 1:00 pm SMT 4050

Flu Shot Clinic

Monday, October 6
8:00 am – 4:30 pm SMT 4050

Friday, October 17
8:00 am – 4:30 pm SMT 4050

Thursday, October 23
8:00 am – 4:30 pm SMT 4080

FSA Information Meeting

Tuesday, October 14
12:15 – 1:15 pm SMT 1660

Monday, October 20
12 noon – 1:00 pm SMT 1650

Tuesday, October 28
11:45 am – 12:45 pm SMT 1610

Powers of Attorney

Wednesday, October 15
12 noon – 1:00 pm SMT 4050

Enrollment – Deferred Compensation

Thursday, October 16
12 noon – 12:45 pm SMT 4080

Free Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, October 29
Between 10:30 – 1:30 SMT 4096

Women and Investing – Deferred Compensation

Wednesday, October 29
12 noon – 12:45 pm SMT 4020
Register at 206-447-1924

self care

Breast Cancer: Lower Your Risk

By Diane McReynolds, Founder, Personal Best Healthlines

Scientists have identified several factors that can raise or lower your breast cancer risk. Most researchers attribute the majority of cases to lifestyle or environmental factors, not a genetic tendency. These include overweight and lack of exercise.

If you're overweight, losing as little as 5% of your body weight can reduce your cancer risk substantially, according to Dr. Anne McTiernan with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. If you need to lose weight, discuss the best approach and goals with your health care provider.

How much exercise do you need to stay healthy? At a minimum, strive to get 30 minutes a day of moderate-intensity physical activity at least 5 days a week. More exercise is associated with an even lower risk of breast cancer.

More choices that may reduce your breast cancer risk:

- **If you smoke, quit.** Early studies show a possible link to long-term heavy smoking.
- **Breastfeed babies** for 6 months or longer.
- **Eat a diet** high in vegetables, fruits and whole grains and low in saturated fat.

Your best defenders of breast health are clinical breast exams by your health care provider and mammograms. Ask your provider about the best screening approach based on your personal health history, family history and other factors.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

body matters

Cold Relief

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

The average adult gets a cold 2 to 4 times a year. There's no cure for the cold virus, but some remedies can help you feel better, sooner.

Self-care and home remedies:

Get **extra rest** and **relaxation** to help your immune system fight the virus. Drink warm water and other fluids.

Chicken soup and **herbal teas** are especially good at breaking up mucus. To soothe a sore throat and loosen mucus, gargle using ½ teaspoon of salt stirred in a cup of warm water. Run a humidifier to help keep mucous membranes moist. And avoid tobacco smoke.

Over-the-counter products:

Saline nose drops and **sinus rinses** can open up clogged nasal passages; carefully follow label directions.

Antihistamines help relieve a runny nose. Use caution in operating heavy equipment or driving since the medication may make you drowsy.

Decongestants reduce nasal congestion but can cause increased heart rate, anxiety and insomnia. Limit use of decongestant nasal sprays to 3 days.

Acetaminophen is in many cold medicines to relieve pain. Taking excess amounts (more than 4,000 milligrams a day from all sources) may damage the liver. Don't double up on products containing acetaminophen.

Note: Antibiotics are not effective against colds and other viral infections.

Inflammation Linked to Many Disorders

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Your body's natural response to injury or infection is to produce inflammation. When you experience redness, swelling, heat or pain, inflammation is occurring. It helps your body provide increased blood flow and immune activity to areas of the body that need to heal.

But inflammation that goes on too long can seriously damage the body. For instance, the immune system may become so reactive that it mistakenly attacks healthy tissues. This can cause autoimmune disorders such as type 1 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and multiple sclerosis.

In other cases chronic inflammation can lead to conditions such as heart attacks, cancer and Alzheimer's. Other disorders linked to inflammation include high blood pressure, asthma, allergies, depression, gum disease and psoriasis, according to early research.

So why doesn't inflammation always turn off when it should? Scientists have found that being overweight and obese may be factors as fat cells make substances called *cytokines* that promote inflammation.

Studies also indicate that smoking, excess alcohol, stress, lack of exercise and untreated infections can prolong the inflammatory response. Low intake of fruits and vegetables and excess amounts of saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, and refined and processed foods may also trigger chronic inflammation. Fortunately, you can improve many of these factors and achieve a healthful balance.

best bites

Cooking Tip:
Pasta Perfection

When cooking pasta, make sure to use plenty of water in a large pot and boil fully before adding your pasta (adding oil or salt is not mandatory). Cook pasta at a rolling boil, stirring frequently. Cooking times vary from about 7 to 10 minutes depending on the shape and thickness of the pasta – taste check for your desired tenderness. When you need to reserve pasta for later, add a spoon of oil to prevent sticking. **And a tip from our dietitian, Cara Rosenbloom:** Pasta cooked **al dente** (firm to the bite) has a lower glycemic index than softer, well-cooked noodles.

Email and Texting Etiquette

Today's instant digital communication makes it simple and fast to get your message across. When you're typing with 2 thumbs on the go, remember these etiquette tips:

Consider. Before you hit "send," think about the aim of your communication. Is an electronic message the best way to convey your message? If you're trying to explain a complicated problem, share sensitive news, or you have several points to make, it might be better to talk in person, on the telephone or via video chat.

Simplify. Emailing and texting work best for short messages and simple requests. If a lengthy or large group conversation is required, the point can get lost in long chains of texts and emails.

Think. Read before you send. Does it make sense? Is the tone courteous and professional? If you used a voice-to-text feature or typed quickly, proofread for typos and potential miscommunication.

>> Emailing and texting are convenient, but remember that the rules of professional courtesy and communication apply – even on the fly.

eating smart

Food Habits Everyone Needs

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Being nutrition-conscious is crucial to a healthy lifestyle. This includes adopting some basic food habits regardless of age, gender or health status.

Following these concepts can help you maintain a healthy weight, while preventing or treating chronic disease.

1. **Choose whole foods first.** Stick with fresh foods instead of highly processed packaged items.
2. **Eat more vegetables.** Ensure that they fill at least half of your grocery cart, and learn how to prepare them to your liking.
3. **Make healthy foods convenient.** When you bring vegetables and fruits home, peel and cut them for easy snacks.
4. **Choose whole grains instead of refined grains.** They provide more vitamins, minerals and fiber, which help protect against type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease. See our **Tuna Pasta Salad** recipe made with whole-wheat rotini on this page.
5. **Enjoy fish.** Its high-protein content and dose of heart-healthy omega-3 fats are a winning combination.
6. **Drink water instead of soft drinks and other high-sugar beverages.** It will help you cut back on sugar and chemicals while staying well hydrated.
7. **Eat a protein-rich breakfast.** The morning meal is crucial for prepping your brain for a busy morning, but a donut won't cut it. Try Greek yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese or boiled eggs.
8. **Control portions.** Enjoy and savor each bite and remember that "more" does not taste better.
9. **Cook at home.** When eating out, you can't control the ingredients in your food like you can in your own kitchen!

Tuna Pasta Salad

EASY | RECIPE
From Personal Best®

½ lb. fresh **green beans**
1 cup **grape tomatoes**, halved
½ cup **red onion**, chopped
¼ cup pitted **Kalamata olives**, sliced
¼ cup chopped fresh **basil** (or 1 tsp dried)
2, 6½ oz. cans **water-packed tuna**, drained
8 oz. **whole-wheat rotini pasta**, cooked

Dressing:
3 tbsp **olive oil**
2 tbsp fresh **lemon juice**
1 tsp **Dijon mustard**

1. Whisk dressing until creamy.
2. Trim and cut beans into 1½-inch pieces. Steam until fork-tender (8-10 minutes); rinse under cold water.
3. Place beans in a large bowl with tomatoes, onion, olives and basil.
4. Gently add tuna, pasta and dressing to vegetables. Serve with lemon slices; add salt and pepper to taste.

Makes 10 cups. Per cup:
209 calories | 15.5g protein | 7.7g total fat | 1g sat fat | 4.6g mono fat | 1g poly fat | 19.4mg cholesterol | 22g carb | 3.5g sugar | 2.6g fiber | 244mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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News & Notes

Make your 2015 benefits changes by **October 31**

Open Enrollment is October 6 – October 31.

Here are some benefit tips as you plan for 2015:

- **Review Plan Changes** in the Open Enrollment Highlights at personnelweb/benefits/home.aspx
- **Go to a Benefits Fair** (see page 1).
- **Enroll online** (from home or work) if you have changes for 2015. Go to www.seattle.gov; "City Employee Resources" in the "Need Help" section. After logging into Employee Self-Service, choose Open Enrollment under Benefits.
- **Review your Seattle Shares** charitable giving contributions.
- **Enroll/Re-enroll** in a Health Care or Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account.
- **Review your AD&D and Life insurance beneficiaries** on Employee Self-Service.

top safety

Social Media Precautions

Cyber crimes are on the rise. And no wonder – most of us are online at least part of the day. People who frequent social media sites are especially vulnerable. According to Symantec's 2013 Internet Security Threat report, approximately 10% of all social media users have received a cyber threat and more than 600,000 social media accounts are compromised daily. What can you do to protect yourself?

Read the social media sites' privacy policies and settings before you join them.

Don't post your birth year, address, phone number or other personal information on social media sites, which hackers often target.

Beware of "like-jacking," when cybercriminals post false "like" buttons. When you "like" the page, it could go to a web page that downloads malware (malicious software, such as worms, spyware, Trojan horses and viruses). Make sure you "like" a page only after confirming with a friend or trusted source that **they** asked you.

Think twice before sharing your vacation plans and photos on social media. ***Tip:*** Wait until you get home to post information about your trip.

Verify sources before clicking on links in email messages. They could be false emails that appear to be sent from social media sites telling you your account is suspended or notifying you of a friend request.

Finally, if you are a victim of a social media crime, report it to your local police as soon as possible.

Physical Therapy: Back to Active

➡ Continued from page 1.

Before your physical therapy ends, your therapist should review and provide ongoing exercise instructions. When you transition from supervised therapy to a personal exercise regimen:

1. Be clear about which exercises to do, how to do them, for how long, and how you should feel while exercising.
2. Go easy to avoid injury and discourage setbacks.
3. Commit to staying physically active and strong – avoid slipping into a sedentary lifestyle.

The benefits of exercise last as long as you stay active.

expert advice

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Q: What is gluten sensitivity?

A: People with gluten sensitivity can have adverse reactions from consuming **gluten**, a protein found in wheat, barley, rye and other grains. People most vulnerable are those with **celiac disease**, a lifelong autoimmune condition that can lead to intestinal damage. Symptoms include diarrhea, constipation, abdominal pain, bloating, joint pain, headaches and fatigue.

Non-celiac gluten sensitivity, a milder condition, can cause symptoms similar to celiac disease. It doesn't generally cause intestinal damage.

Diagnostic testing: People with celiac disease test positive on a specific blood test, which can be confirmed with an intestinal biopsy. In gluten sensitivity, both tests are negative.

There is no definitive "positive result" diagnostic test for non-celiac gluten sensitivity. Your provider may suggest working with a dietitian on an elimination diet. This involves avoiding certain trigger foods that may cause problems, and then slowly introducing these foods back into the diet and watching for symptoms.