

TAKE CHARGE!



for health and living

September 2012



Top Fitness

Aerobic Exercise: The Heart of the Matter

Your heart needs regular exercise to stay strong. Exercise helps lower your blood pressure, boost HDL (good) cholesterol, maintain a healthy weight, control diabetes and ease stress.

Even better, exercise doesn't require lots of time or have to be strenuous to be effective. Even moderate-level activities may help ward off heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer.

The key is to choose activities that get your body moving and raise your heart rate for an extended period of time.

These include brisk walking, dancing, cycling and swimming, as well as some gardening and household chores.

After 6 to 10 weeks of aerobic workouts (30 non-stop minutes, minimum 3 times weekly), your heart muscle will strengthen. Build up to a more vigorous regimen and you may add years and quality to your life.

If you're put off by 30 non-stop minutes of exercise, remember that any increase in physical activity can improve your cardiovascular health and reduce your risk of disease.



NOTE: Consult your health care provider before making a major change in your physical activity level.

Do you know the whole truth about grains?

Turn to page 3. ➔



Cholesterol Education Month

Steps to Healthy Cholesterol

Many people can improve blood cholesterol levels and heart health with these steps:

- Lose excess weight, especially around your waistline.
- Walk daily to raise cardiovascular fitness.
- Cut saturated fat by limiting foods such as meats and full-fat dairy products.
- Avoid trans fat. Check ingredient lists for partially hydrogenated fats.
- Eat at least 2 servings of fatty fish each week for omega-3 fatty acids.
- Add soluble fiber daily, found in foods such as oats, dried beans, squash and apples.
- If you smoke, quit. Kicking tobacco helps your heart and overall health.

Note: You should get a fasting lipoprotein profile every 5 years starting at age 20.



city events

Money Basics Webinar

Wednesday, September 19

12 noon - 1:00 pm Registration TBA

Asset Allocation - Deferred Compensation

Thursday, September 13

12 noon - 12:45 pm
SMT 4080

Women and Investing 301 Deferred Compensation

Wednesday, September 26

12 noon - 12:45 pm
SMT 4020
Register at 206-447-1924

Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, September 26

Stop by 10:30 am - 1:30 pm
SMT 4096

Long-Term Care Information For Those Currently Without Insurance

Tuesday, September 11

7:30 - 9:00 am
and 12 noon - 1:30 pm
Webinar Registration TBA

Wednesday, September 12

8:00 - 9:30 am
and 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Bertha Knight Landes, City Hall

Thursday, September 13

8:00 - 9:30 am
Rainier Community Center
and 1:00 - 2:30 pm
Bertha Knight Landes, City Hall

Tuesday, September 18

12 noon - 1:30 pm
and 7:00 - 8:30 pm
Webinar Registration TBA

Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later.
~ Og Mandino



Reach your personal best with Smart Moves at www.personalbest.com/extras/sept12tools.

This Edition ➔ About Your Back
Personal Best ➔ Wise Health Consumer
➔ Produce Power

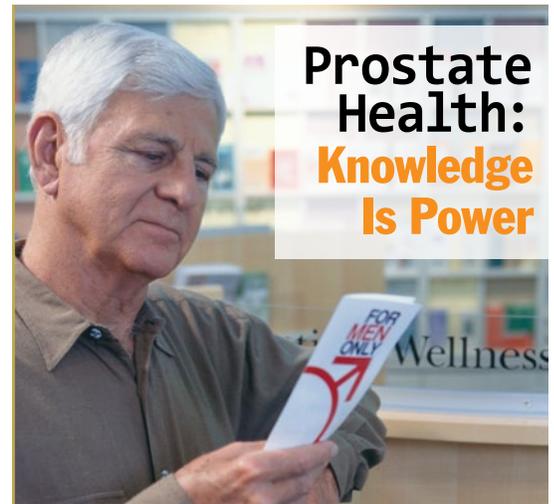
Wise Health Care Consumer

Health care seems more complicated than ever these days. **How do smart consumers navigate the system?**



- 🕒 **Keep your own medical records.** Make a list of your medications, providers (with contact information) and allergies. If you can scan and save reports or test results online, you can then access them anytime. Yes, there's an app for that.
- 🕒 **Prevent problems.** Schedule regular checkups, and stay current with immunizations and screenings.
- 🕒 **Choose providers carefully.** Obtain referrals from trusted friends or professionals, and check for board certification and experience.
- 🕒 **Arrive at appointments prepared.** Bring a notepad and questions.

- 🕒 **Be wise with drugs.** Read the labels and take as directed. Learn side effects and possible drug interactions. Buy generics or use mail order when available to save money. Discard expired meds.
- 🕒 **Save the ER for true emergencies.** Call your provider (or self-treat) for low-grade fevers, minor cuts, rashes and mild sunburns. **Call 911** or go to the ER for loss of consciousness, uncontrollable bleeding, signs of a stroke or heart attack, an allergic reaction with breathing difficulty, or poisoning.



Prostate Health: Knowledge Is Power

The prostate is a walnut-sized gland in men that surrounds the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder. It causes problems for many men. See your health care provider if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Your urination stream is slow.
- You often wake during the night to urinate.
- You notice blood in your urine.
- Your bladder doesn't feel completely empty after urination.

Some of these are signs of prostate enlargement, a non-life-threatening condition. But they could also be signs of prostate cancer, so don't delay getting a checkup.

Screening for prostate cancer is controversial. Earlier this year the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommended against screening for healthy men with no family history of prostate cancer. However, the American Cancer Society disagrees and recommends the following:

- Talk with your health care provider starting at:
 - Age 50, if you're at average risk for prostate cancer (and are expected to live at least 10 more years).
 - Age 45, if you're at high risk for prostate cancer. Risk factors include African-American heritage or having a father, brother or son (first-degree relative) diagnosed with prostate cancer before age 65.
 - Age 40, if you're at highest risk. This applies to men who have more than 1 first-degree relative who had prostate cancer before age 65.



During **Prostate Cancer Awareness Month**, talk to your provider if you're a guy and one of the guidelines listed above applies to you.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

safety sense

About Your Back



Back injuries are common, but they can be prevented. **Here are some ways to keep your back healthy and pain free:**

- **Ask for help if an item is too heavy.** If no one is available, wait for help or use a hand truck.
- **Lift properly.** Bring the load close to your body (even if that means getting down on one knee). Lift with your legs, not your back, as you straighten. Avoid twisting your body. Instead, turn your entire body when carrying the load.
- **Use a dolly or a hand truck.** Stack the heaviest load on the bottom, to lower the center of gravity, and position the load on the hand truck's axle.
- **Don't rely on a back belt.** There is no scientific evidence that back belts can prevent back injury.
- **Perform a team lift properly.** First, select teammates of similar height and strength. Then assign a leader to help direct the lift. Finally, determine commands you will use while lifting, such as "walk," "turn" and "down."



A few minutes of planning can save your back.

Take the Stress Out of Your Commute



Whether you carpool, drive or take public transportation, use these ideas to make your commute less stressful and more productive.

- Maximize downtime.** If you aren't the driver, use commute time to enjoy podcasts or an audio book.
- Make the break.** Use your commute to transition successfully between work and home. As you travel, imagine leaving work behind, and visualize the first thing you'll do when you arrive home. In the morning, mentally rehearse the day ahead.
- Leave extra time.** Get up 15 minutes earlier. You'll rush less and feel less pressured. Plus, arriving at work early will give you a jump on the day.
- Change your route.** If your commute makes you tense, choose a less stressful route. Even if it's a bit longer, the relief might make it worth a few extra minutes.

Bottom line: make good use of your commute; you control it before it controls you.

Whole grains are packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other health-protecting nutrients. For good health, experts recommend you make half your grains whole. Eat at least 3 servings (about 48 grams) of whole grains per day. *Look closer at these delicious choices:*

- 1. Oats** aren't just for breakfast. *Try:* bread with added whole-grain oats, muffins baked with whole-grain oat flour or oat risotto as a side dish. You can also replace wheat flour in a recipe with oat flour.
- 2. Brown rice** is more nutritious than white. *Try:* brown rice in stir-fry, in a casserole or as stuffing for baked peppers or tomatoes.
- 3. Spelt** is a type of wheat. It comes in refined and whole-grain versions. *Try:* whole-grain spelt pasta or crackers. *Note:* If the package doesn't say whole grain, it probably isn't.
- 4. Quinoa** (pronounced *KEEN-wa*) is an ancient grain with a nutty flavor and a chewy texture. *Try:* quinoa instead of rice as a side dish or in pilafs (see recipe below) or risotto.
- 5. Corn** is an age-old staple. *Try:* whole-grain cornbread or air-popped popcorn (minus the butter and salt).



Quinoa is a tasty alternative to rice.

What's in a name? When shopping, look for the word **whole** as the first item on the ingredient list, or for the words **100% whole grain** on the product label. Terms such as **brown, nine-grain, mixed grain** and **multi-grain** don't guarantee the product is whole-



grain. *Tip:* Look for the yellow Whole Grain Stamp on the package.

Whole Grain Stamp: Courtesy of Oldways and the Whole Grains Council, www.wholegrainscouncil.org.



Produce Pick of the Month Chili Peppers

Colorful and hot, chili peppers add pizzazz to cuisine around the world. Chili peppers vary in heat intensity and flavor; larger chilies tend to be milder. They're rich in vitamin C (300%) and also provide 20% of vitamin A (percentage of Daily Value for a 2,000-calorie diet). Look for peppers with glossy, firm, unblemished skin and fresh green stems. To "cool off" chilies, remove seeds and veins, or cut them up, and soak them in salt water for at least an hour.

Autumn Pilaf

Flavored with fruit and mint, the hero of this pilaf is quinoa (*KEEN-wa*), high in protein and fiber, and gluten-free.

Dressing:	4 cups quinoa, cooked	¼ cup dried cranberries
2 tbsp fresh lemon juice	1 large Granny Smith apple, finely diced	¼ cup pine nuts
2 tbsp rice wine vinegar	½ cup red onion, finely diced	3 tbsp chopped fresh mint
2 tbsp olive oil		⅓ cup crumbled feta cheese
⅛ tsp coarse salt		

- 1.** Cook quinoa according to package directions (takes about 15 minutes). Meanwhile, combine dressing in a sealed container, and shake well. Set aside.
- 2.** In a large bowl, mix quinoa with apple, onion, cranberries and pine nuts.
- 3.** Before serving, mix in mint, feta and dressing.
- 4.** Serve as a side dish or on hearty greens.

MAKES ABOUT 6 1-cup servings. Per serving:

314 calories | 7.5g protein | 12.6g fat | 2g sat fat | 1.4g mono fat | 2g poly fat | 0mg cholesterol | 43g carbs | 17g sugar | 5g fiber | 153mg sodium



EASY | RECIPE

From Personal Best®

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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News and Notes

Open Enrollment

Monday, October 8 - Wednesday, October 31

- Review your current benefits elections.
- (Re)enroll in a health or dependent care Flexible Spending Account.
- Make your 2013 benefit changes through employee self-service by October 31.

Watch your U.S. mail for more information.

Benefits Fairs and Flu Shot Clinics

• Wednesday, October 3

9:30 am - 2:30 pm

City Hall - Bertha Landes Room

600 4th Avenue 98104

• Tuesday, October 9

7:30 am - 10:00 am

Rainier Community Center - Gym

4600 38th Avenue South 98118

• Wednesday, October 17

7:30 am - 10:00 am

Northgate Community Center - Gym

10510 5th Avenue NE 98125

Flu shot clinics on the Benefits Events Calendar:

seattle.gov/personnel/benefits/home.asp

body and mind

We Need More Sleep

These days more Americans than ever feel sleep-deprived. We often rank our busy schedules higher than our need for sleep. According to the National Sleep Foundation 2012 poll, approximately 4 in 10 respondents said they had problems sleeping at least a few nights a week.

But besides spending less time in bed, many of us don't sleep well while we're there, at least a few nights of the week. We need 7 to 9 hours of sleep every night (or day, if you work shifts), according to the National Sleep Foundation.

If you're chronically tired at work, see your health care provider. An untreated sleep deficiency impairs physical and mental abilities. And lack of sleep creates a safety hazard that contributes to injuries at work and while driving.

Ongoing sleeplessness may also lead to lowered immunity, weight gain, diabetes, high blood pressure and other chronic medical conditions.

Whether you sleep during the day or night, regular moderate exercise, such as walking, can help you sleep better. Avoid heavy meals, alcohol and exercise close to bedtime. Eliminate caffeine.

make sleep a priority.



Fruit and Veggies - More Matters Month

Produce Power

Decades of research have shown that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke and some cancers. For health protection, eat at least 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables daily. (Your needs may differ, depending on your calorie intake and activity level.)



NOW SHOWING →

Find fun videos on selecting, storing and preparing fruits and vegetables at www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/video/VideoCenter.php.

expert advice



Q: Periodontal disease linked to heart disease?

A: For years scientists have observed a possible connection between gum disease and cardiovascular problems such as heart attack, stroke or peripheral artery disease.

After a recent analysis of more than 500 studies, the American Heart Association found that gum disease and heart disease are associated with increased inflammation in the body. But most of the research used observational studies, which haven't shown that gum disease causes heart disease. The studies also haven't shown that periodontal treatment prevents cardiovascular disease.

One reason the two conditions are found together is that they share similar risk factors.

Smoking, excess alcohol, obesity, diabetes and older age increase the chances of developing both gum and heart disease. Conversely, using good oral hygiene practices often goes along with choosing a healthy lifestyle that helps prevent heart disease.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP