

TAKE CHARGE!



for health and living

September 2016

How's Your HDL?



September is Cholesterol Education Month.

Keeping your LDL (bad) cholesterol low is primary to heart health. One part of controlling LDL is boosting your HDL (good) cholesterol.

Basic good health is key to better HDL. Adopting positive lifestyle habits can also help lower LDL cholesterol and lead to other healthful effects. The top recommendations:

- 1. Get active.** Moderate- to vigorous-intensity exercise is best for boosting HDL. Aim for 150 minutes per week of exercise, preferably activity that raises your heart rate. **Note:** Get your health care provider's approval before significantly changing your exercise routine.
- 2. Lose excess weight.** Losing 5% to 10% of your current weight can raise HDL, along with reducing blood pressure and blood sugar.
- 3. Avoid trans fats.** Some manufacturers have eliminated trans fats, but they remain in some processed foods – so check Nutrition Facts panels. Removing trans fats from your diet can improve HDL and LDL levels. Choose better fats found in nuts, olive oil and avocados instead.



- 4. Reduce refined carbohydrates.** Switch to whole grains, such as oats, quinoa and brown rice, instead of white flour and white rice.
- 5. Limit sugary and highly processed foods;** replace with fruits, vegetables and protein low in saturated fat.

6. Stop smoking. Smoking lowers your HDL and raises your LDL.

Screening: Have your health care provider check your cholesterol and recommend the best approach to improving your numbers.



Exercise: Warm Up, Cool Down

When pressed for time, people may tend to neglect the warm-up and cool-down segments of their exercise routine. If you do, here are several benefits you could be missing.

A proper warm-up (and stretch) can reduce stress on joints and increase flexibility, muscle control, oxygen supply and calorie burn, as well as help get you mentally ready to start working out.

The cool-down allows for a gradual transition from exercise, which reduces light-headedness and injuries to the ligaments, joints and muscles. It also adds protection from heart attacks.

Continued on page 4.

city events

Simplify Your Life Webinar

Wednesday, September 14

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

SMT 4080

Login: See future flyer*

Working and Home Balancing Act Webinar

Tuesday, September 20

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Registration: See future flyer*

FSA Information Webinar

Tuesday, September 27

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Registration: See future flyer*

Free Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, September 28

10:30 am - 1:30 pm

SMT 4070

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



September celebrates Fruits & Veggies – More Matters Month.

Back-to-school lesson: Teach kids early on to enjoy fruits and vegetables every day for snacking, in salads and at every meal; add whole fruit (no sugar added) atop cereal or plain Greek yogurt; dip vegetables in hummus or bean dips; and create vegetarian soups and pasta dishes.



September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

This is the second most common cancer in men, after skin cancer. Risk rises rapidly after age 50. The American Cancer Society recommends that healthy men at age 50 of average risk and who are expected to live at least 10 more years discuss with their health care provider the risks and benefits of getting the PSA test and digital rectal exam before deciding about screening. When diagnosed early, the 5-year survival rate is nearly 100%.





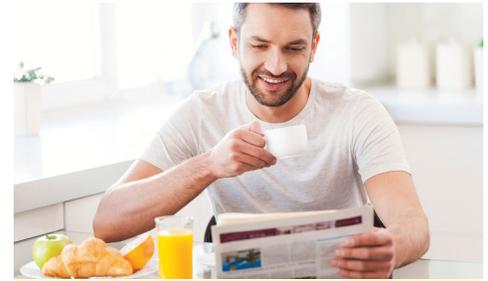
Decoding the Studies Behind the News

Did you catch today's medical news? It's hard to miss the headlines – reporting of medical studies, scientific claims and health warnings has increased significantly in recent years.

It's a lot of information to process – especially when the findings don't always answer your questions, or multiple studies about the same thing contradict each other.

For the real story behind the headlines, consider:

- 1. Size and duration of the study:** Studies that last for several years or are ongoing, involving thousands of people, are more reliable than small, short-term studies. Examples of famous, long-term studies: the Framingham Heart Study, Physicians' Health Study and Nurses' Health Study.
- 2. Source of the study:** Research papers published in clinical journals (such as *Journal of the American Medical Association* and *New England Journal of Medicine*) have been peer reviewed by experts in the same field as the papers' authors.
- 3. Type of study:** In general, randomized trials, cohort (long-term, ongoing) studies and human subjects provide the most relevant data.
- 4. Previous research:** The more science that's available with similar findings, the more reliable the study. If the study's results are new, consider it a preliminary step with more research needed.



- ▶ **Who funded the study?** Sponsors who have a financial interest in study results may influence how studies are performed.
- ▶ **Some reliable sources:** When you want to learn more about or track the development of a particular medical study, start with medical journals, such as those noted to the left, and federal websites (.gov). They include the CDC, National Institutes of Health and National Library of Medicine.
- ▶ **Practice skepticism.** Each new finding is usually just a small part of growing knowledge. Knowing this may save you some worry and confusion.

hst bites TIP OF THE MONTH:

Top Salty Foods

The 5 foods that contribute the most sodium to our diets are: bread, pizza, deli meats, soup and processed chicken. Sodium adds up quickly because we eat these foods frequently. A simple sandwich (bread and deli meat) can contain 1,500 mg of sodium, which is an entire day's worth of sodium. Try open-faced sandwiches with fresh chicken or turkey instead.



5 Steps to Less Foot Pain

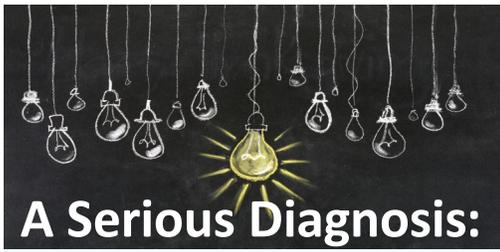
A major obstacle to staying physically active is foot soreness. To beat the sore feet cycle:

- 1. Treat your feet to good shoes.** Make sure they allow you to function normally, whatever your activity. The wrong footwear can lead to heel pain, bunions, corns and other painful, chronic problems. Feet change shape as we age, so always get sized before you buy. Style is nice, but shoes should conform to the shape of your feet, with a roomy toe box and snug, low heel.
- 2. Use shoe inserts.** Over-the-counter or custom orthotics, including arch supports, insoles and heel liners, come in various materials and designs. They can provide comfort and aid movement despite stubborn foot problems.
- 3. Research before choosing sport shoes.** A podiatrist can help, especially if you have chronic foot problems or hard-to-fit feet.
- 4. Retire those pointy, sky-high heels.** They can cause serious, sometimes permanent foot, leg and back problems. The same goes for non-supportive flip-flop sandals. Limit wearing extreme, non-supportive footwear to short periods.
- 5. Lose excess weight.** Your feet bear the weight of your entire body, so the more pounds they support, the more stressed they become.



If foot pain is keeping you inactive, try a low-impact sport such as swimming or cycling. And get help from your health care provider.





A Serious Diagnosis:

What Now?

People are diagnosed with serious illnesses or chronic ailments every day.

How can we cope with critical diseases such as diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's? First, fully understanding your condition will help inspire confidence and relieve anxiety.

>>Don't panic or berate yourself. Try to stay positive by viewing your diagnosis as a time to focus on you and your health. For example, learning you have heart failure may prompt you to start eating better to control weight – something you may have wanted to do for some time.

>>Learn everything you can about your diagnosis – what is the illness, why do I have it, and how can I get control of it so that it doesn't lead to bigger problems?

>>Get good advice. Work closely with your health care providers, especially in the early stages of diagnosis. Take charge of your condition by getting involved in your medical care decisions, especially the treatment.

>>Maintain a normal lifestyle as much as possible. But be ready for adjustments, such as extra time needed for treatment. Talk with your health care providers about your options.

>>Find personal coping methods. Keep an ongoing record of your treatment to feel more in control. Practice meditation and relaxation. Plan a vacation. Remain involved with favorite activities and social relations, and enjoy life at every opportunity.



Sidestep Sodium

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Did you know? Only 5% of the sodium you consume comes from table salt. And while it's true that salt adds flavor to food, and we do need some sodium for normal body functioning, we easily consume more than we need.

That's a concern, because too much sodium can increase your risk of high blood pressure. To cut back on sodium, eat fewer processed foods – the source of more than 75% of the average person's sodium intake. Processed foods include fast food and restaurant meals, deli meat and packaged foods (bags, bottles, boxes and cans).



Besides enhancing flavor, why do food processors add sodium? Sodium-based ingredients may be used for many other reasons. For example:

- ✓ **Sodium bicarbonate** (baking soda) is used to help make cakes rise.
- ✓ **Sodium benzoate** is used in condiments to maintain freshness.
- ✓ **Sodium nitrite** is used in deli meats to prevent bacterial growth.
- ✓ **Sodium phosphate** is used to emulsify oil into processed cheese.

And, some sweet foods, such as candy bars and breakfast cereals, may contain sodium as a preservative.



Reduce sodium in 2 steps: (1) Minimize packaged foods and (2) replace them with fresh, unprocessed foods including vegetables, fruit, whole grains, lean meat and poultry, fish, nuts and beans. When you must buy processed items, look for foods that list the percent daily value for sodium as 5% or less.

SOLE with LEMON-CAPER SAUCE

EASY | RECIPE

From Personal Best®

4 (5 oz.) sole fillets
(or other white fish)
Pinch salt
1½ tbsp extra virgin
olive oil

Sauce:
1 tbsp butter
1 tsp lemon zest
3 tbsp lemon juice
2 tbsp dill, chopped
2 tsp capers



Clean and dry sole. Sprinkle with salt. In a large pan, add oil and set over medium heat. When hot, add sole. Let cook until opaque and golden, about 2-3 minutes per side. Remove fish and put on a plate. **To make sauce:** Over medium heat, add butter to same pan that fish was cooked in. Once butter melts, add lemon zest, lemon juice, dill and capers and cook for 1-2 minutes, stirring. Spoon sauce over fish fillets. Serve with lemon wedges.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving (1 fillet):

174 calories | 21g protein | 9g total fat | 3g saturated fat | 5g mono fat | 1g poly fat
| 68mg cholesterol | 1g carbohydrate | 0g sugar | 0g fiber | 172mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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News & Notes

› Ready to Quit?

Take the next step and contact Quit for Life. You'll receive a Quitting Plan; nicotine substitute patch or gum; expert support over the phone and by text message with your Quit Coach. Regular employees and covered adult family members are eligible for this free City program. Call **1-866-784-8454** to enroll, or go to www.quitnow.net/Seattle/.

› Open Enrollment is Soon!

Start thinking now about your future benefit and financial needs. Make your 2017 benefit choices Monday, October 3 through Friday, October 28 through Employee Self-Service. Watch your home mail for a late September Open Enrollment letter.

› Health Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Planning

Add up your 2016 out-of-pocket expenses (copays, coinsurance) to start estimating your 2017 out-of-pocket costs. The maximum contribution for the health care FSA will remain \$2,550 in 2017. (Remember, up to \$500 from 2016 can roll over into 2017, as long as it results in a health care FSA account with minimum of \$120.)

Safety Leader

Leaders encourage, develop and live the values of an organization. Coworkers look up to them, and when safety is concerned nothing can be more important. Take charge of safety in your workplace by setting the right tone:

- ✓ **Lead** by example. Your actions affect your coworkers, supervisors and even bystanders.
- ✓ **Never** take shortcuts. Make sure you always follow procedures even if you are short on time.
- ✓ **Challenge** coworkers to work toward a perfect safety record.
- ✓ **Ask** coworkers to submit safety ideas and suggestions at weekly meetings or by placing suggestion boxes around the workplace. Take suggestions to management biweekly (immediately if the suggestion concerns an emergency).
- ✓ **Acknowledge** when a coworker follows proper safety protocol.
- ✓ **Identify** and report safety hazards in your workplace.
- ✓ **Keep** your area clean and clutter free.



Exercise: Warm Up, Cool Down

→ Continued from page 1.

Use these tips to warm up:

- Start your exercise slowly and increase your pace gradually. For instance, if you're running, jog first.
- The more intense the activity, the longer your warm-up should be.
- After you warm up (5 to 10 minutes), do some light stretching.
- Do not do static (holding) stretches or bounce while stretching.
- Examples of stretching include shoulder rolls, ankle rolls, arm circles, high knee marches, hip circles and squats without weights.
- Breathe deeply by inhaling and exhaling using your diaphragm.

Use these tips to cool down:

- Walk for a few minutes, gradually slowing until your heart rate is below 120 beats per minute.
- Include stretching. Hold each stretch for 10 to 30 seconds. Make sure you don't bounce and that the stretch is not painful.
- Try these static stretches: www.hss.edu/conditions_stretching-tips-athletes-dynamic-static.asp.

Note: Get your health care provider's okay before significantly changing your exercise routine if you have a chronic condition such as arthritis, obesity, diabetes or heart disease.

expert advice

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Q: What is serotonin?

A: Serotonin is a type of brain chemical, or *neurotransmitter*, made by cells in the brain, digestive tract and blood. Such widespread distribution allows it to regulate many functions that affect health. Serotonin helps control mood, appetite, sleep, memory, temperature regulation and social behavior. These functions are affected when serotonin levels aren't normal.

Low production of serotonin can lead to depression. Certain antidepressant medications are designed to boost serotonin levels to lift mood. **Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)** are commonly used to treat depression as well as panic attacks and other anxiety disorders.

Excess serotonin also can cause problems. When 2 or more drugs that raise serotonin levels are taken together, a condition called *serotonin syndrome* may result. Symptoms include fever, sweating, rapid heartbeat, high blood pressure, confusion, hallucinations, seizures, muscle rigidity and diarrhea. Serotonin syndrome is a medical emergency; it can be fatal without immediate treatment.