

Take Charge!

FOR HEALTH AND LIVING



MAY 2010

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Healthy Habits for Your BRAIN

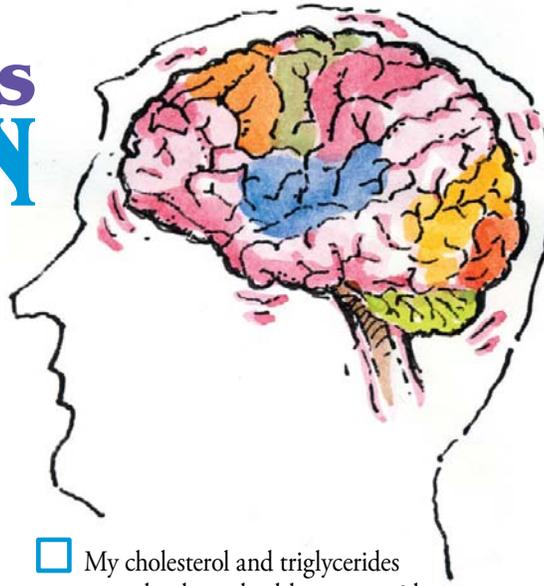
Did you know what's good for your heart is good for your brain? The 3 big heartbreakers – blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol and uncontrolled diabetes – can cause plaque buildup in coronary arteries.

This excess plaque clogs arteries that send blood to the heart and the brain – a risk for heart disease and stroke. These 3 conditions may also increase risk of dementia (mental deterioration), including Alzheimer's disease (AD) and memory loss. What are you doing to protect your gray cells? Take a brain check:

I maintain a healthy weight. *Benefits:* A healthy weight helps prevent or control high blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol and diabetes.

My blood sugar is under 100. *Benefits:* Normal blood sugar helps keep blood vessels healthy, including brain arteries, and reduces your risk of diabetes and stroke.

My blood pressure is less than 120/80. *Benefits:* Healthy BP lowers risk for heart attack, stroke, AD and vascular dementia.



My cholesterol and triglycerides are at levels my health care provider recommends. *Benefits:* Low LDL (bad) cholesterol helps keep your blood vessels clear and blood flowing. It also lowers risk of stroke, vascular dementia and AD.

I do not use tobacco. *Benefits:* Avoiding tobacco helps keep your arteries flexible, and protects you against vascular dementia.

I drink no more than 1 alcoholic drink a day (women) or no more than 2 a day (men). *Benefit:* Limiting alcohol helps reduce your dementia risk.

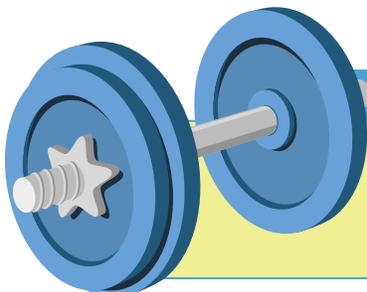
If you checked all 6, fantastic! For factors you didn't check, see your health care provider about making changes.



MAY GOAL

Try strength training 2-3 times a week.

Resistance exercises strengthen your bones and muscles and help protect your joints.



Wellness Events

Making the Most of Your Memory

May 5 or May 18
12 noon - 1:00 pm
SMT Room 4050/4060

Deferred Comp Enrollment

May 13
12 noon - 12:45 pm
SMT Room 4080

Blood Pressure Screening

(See DASH article, page 3)

May 26
Stop by 10:30 am - 1:30 pm
SMT Room 4096

Diabetes Expo

May 1
Stop by 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
WA State Convention Center
Info: 1-888-DIABETES Ext. 7212

Bike to Work Day

May 21
Pick up a water bottle, snacks, and maps, and get a bike check at stations throughout the region!
Look for City-specific activity postings through email.
Find out how you can start commuting to work by bike – call Eric Mamroth at 684-5420.
Register for Bike to Work Month at cbcef.org.



SUBSCRIBERS: Find more tips on everyday wellness available at Well Connections: www.personalbest.com/Extras/bbwc0510

Have Exercise, Will Travel

↓ GATE (A)



Fitting in fitness while traveling can be tough, especially if you travel frequently. Just because you're on the road doesn't mean you have to put exercise aside. With some planning, you can make up your own on-the-road fitness routine to keep you on track.

Before you go, call the hotel and ask about hotel or nearby fitness facilities. Check out the hotel grounds or a local park for a safe, secure area in which to walk or jog.

If you prefer privacy, do exercises you can perform in your room. For example, you can do stretching or core strength exercises, triceps dips with a chair, push-ups, or jog in place for stamina and cardio. Or bring your favorite exercise DVD.

Depending on your baggage space, pack a swimsuit, workout clothing and running shoes. Bring a pedometer, workout bands, fitness log or a music player with high-energy tunes.

Staying fit on the road is well worth the effort – it relieves jet lag, improves circulation, burns extra calories and boosts your energy.

QUIZ

Asthma

May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month – the perfect time to see how much you know about this condition that affects millions of Americans, young and old.



1. Secondhand smoke is especially harmful to children with asthma:

True False

2. Regular, moderate exercise can help people who have asthma.

True False

3. Which of these medications are used to treat asthma?

- a. anti-inflammatory agents
- b. expectorant
- c. bronchodilators
- d. none of the above

4. There is no cure for asthma.

True False

ANSWERS

1. *True* – If your child has asthma also control their exposure to wood smoke, animal dander, dust, sprays, molds and perfume.
2. *True* – Regular moderate exercise, particularly swimming, can benefit asthmatics because it strengthens their lungs and overall health. Exercise can trigger asthma symptoms, but don't be discouraged. Many great athletes have learned to live, and win, with asthma. Get your health care provider's okay first.
3. *a and c* – Anti-inflammatory agents are administered orally or by inhaler. They help reduce bronchial inflammation and provide long-term prevention. Bronchodilators are usually administered by an inhaler and act immediately to open the airways by relaxing the bronchial muscles.
4. *True* – While asthma is incurable, it can be managed with lifestyle measures, medication and a health care provider's help.

Cure Morning Lateness

Do you wake up every day and race against the clock? Mornings don't have to be a mad dash if you make a few simple changes. Try these:

GET ENOUGH SLEEP. The standard for adults is 7-9 hours. If you feel tired upon rising, you may need more sleep. *Tip:* To get sufficient sleep, go to bed 15 minutes earlier each night until you reach your goal.

GO OUTSIDE FIRST THING. The morning light, even under clouds, signals the brain to "wake up".

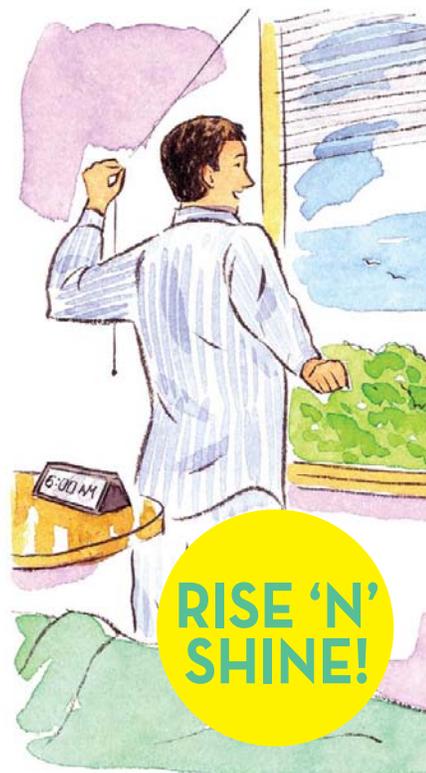
PREPARE THE NIGHT BEFORE. Organize the next day's clothing, meals or other needs.

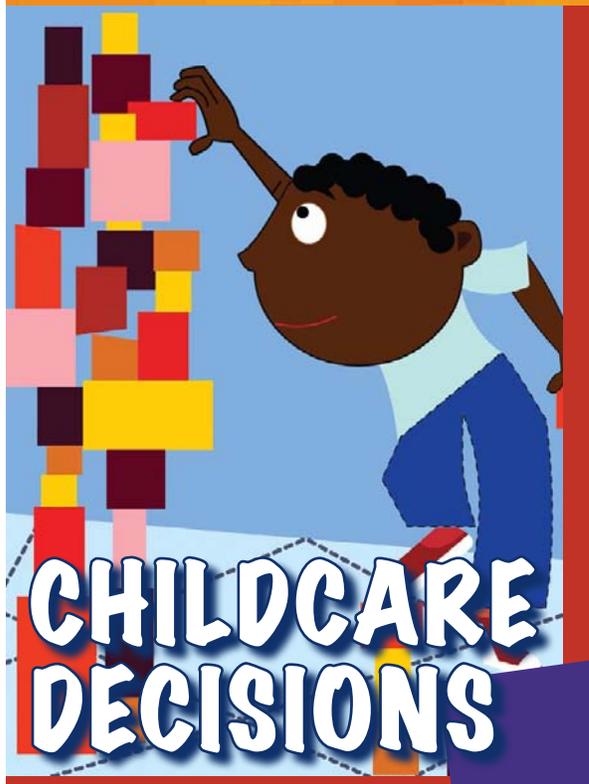
DON'T USE THE SNOOZE. That snooze button on your clock radio can sabotage your new routine, especially if you're in the habit of pushing it numerous times.

STICK TO YOUR SCHEDULE. Keep your sleep-wake times as consistent as possible even on days off and vacations.

BE PATIENT. Developing new habits takes persistence, but if you stick to it, getting up earlier for work will get easier.

EXERCISE AND EAT WELL. Regular exercise can help you sleep deeper and fight fatigue. Healthy meals and snacks energize you for the day's demands.





CHILDCARE DECISIONS

Having a child is life-changing and rewarding. One important decision is whether to take care of the kids yourself or place them in another's care. If you need child care, these steps may help you with your decision:

1 Consider the best care situation based on:

- budget
- full-time or part-time needs
- your children's ages and needs
- any scheduling conflicts

What is DASH?

DASH stands for **Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension**. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) created this plan to help people manage their blood pressure. It limits dietary fat, red meat, sweets and sugared beverages.

The DASH plan recommends: ① eating low-fat or non-fat dairy foods, ② several servings of fruits and vegetables a day, ③ whole grains in place of refined grains and ④ protein, such as fish and soy.

Two DASH studies found that limiting sodium intake (2,300 and 1,500 mg daily) lowered blood pressure as effectively as some hypertension medications. The 1,500 mg-limit plan produced the greatest benefit. *Note:* 2,300 mg = 1 tsp of table salt; 1,500 mg = $\frac{2}{3}$ tsp of table salt.



DASH also helps control blood pressure because it's high in heart-protecting calcium, magnesium, potassium, protein and fiber.

2 Review your care options:

- In-home provider – at someone's home
- A nanny or caregiver in your home
- A family member, such as a grandparent
- A daycare center or preschool

3 Check child care resources and referrals from friends, neighbors or coworkers.

Start researching as early as possible. You may be placed on a waiting list.

4 Before choosing a daycare facility, do some investigating:

- Visit the facility with your children and observe how they react to the surroundings and the staff.
- Ask about the adult-child ratio. For infants and toddlers, the ratio should be no more than 1:4 and for pre-schoolers, 1:10.
- Review the caregivers' qualifications, including training and education.
- Make sure the center is state-licensed and accredited by a national organization.
- Ask about their policies, such as security, sick policies for kids, cleaning procedures, and holidays off.
- Ask about the daily agenda, including playtime, feedings and naps.

Traveling Abroad?



It pays to do your homework before you start packing. The U.S.

Department of State recommends these 10 must-knows before you go:

1. Consult the **Consular Affairs website** at travel.state.gov for travel warnings and other information.
2. Register with the nearest **U.S. embassy or consulate** at your destination (travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/index.aspx) for help in an emergency.
3. Make 2 photocopies of your **passport**, airline tickets, driver's license and credit cards you plan to bring with you. Leave one copy with family at home and pack the other separately from your originals, which you should carry.
4. Avoid **dressing as a tourist** or appearing wealthy.
5. Bring all **medicines and glasses** in a carry-on case, with copies of prescriptions. Leave medicines in their original, labeled containers. If you're uncertain about bringing medications, consult your destination's embassy or before you leave.
6. In countries with strict antiquities laws, such as Mexico, Turkey and Egypt, **always document reproduction purchases**; get an export permit for authentic antiquities.
7. Use **traveler's checks** and/or one credit card instead of cash.
8. Be aware of **pickpockets** (even children), who usually work in pairs or large groups.
9. **Renting a car?** Select a common type of vehicle, and remove rental identification if possible.
10. **Learn to speak a few phrases in the native language**; know how to call for the police or medical help.

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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Asthma or Allergies in Your Family? (see page 2) Make the most of your City pharmacy benefit:

Aetna members*

- Allergy medications: \$20 prescription allowance per month for all non-sedating antihistamines; also applies to some over-the-counter allergy medications with a prescription
- Asthma medications and supplies: 10% coinsurance for generic; 20% for brand

Group Health members*

- Allergy medications: \$15 copay for generic; \$30 copay for brand
- Asthma medications and supplies: \$15 copay for generic; \$30 copay for brand

*Applies to Most City plans; different coverage for Local 27, Local 77 and SPOG plans.

Start a Healthy Activity Habit: Take advantage of spring and get more active. Biking to work may not be your first choice; you may prefer increasing your bike mileage on the weekends or after work. Wheels aren't your deal? Continue your search for a fun, healthy activity habit:

- Join a team – basketball, baseball, soccer, rowing
- Search Seattle Parks and Recreation activities: seattle.gov/parks/activities/default.htm
- Learn something new – swimming, martial arts, tap dance
- Walk in your neighborhood. For maps, see: feetfirst.info/mapping

Make the Most of Every Bite

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Some foods make perfect partners. Macaroni and cheese. Salad and dressing. Strawberries and shortcake. And better yet, certain foods that taste great together also provide more nutritional value if eaten together. Here are some winning food combinations you can add to your plate.

Iron and Vitamin C

Some vegetables and legumes contain iron, but it's not absorbed well without vitamin C. Pair iron-rich foods from column 1 with C-rich foods from column 2 to **help your body absorb more iron.**

Column 1	Column 2
IRON	VITAMIN C
Enriched breakfast cereals	Orange juice
Enriched whole-grain pasta	Red peppers
Legumes (chickpeas, lentils, beans)	Strawberries
Spinach	Tomatoes

Tip: Combine these foods any way you like. Great pairings include cereal with strawberries, bean salad with spinach and red peppers, and spaghetti with tomato sauce.

Calcium and Inulin

Try calcium-rich foods, such as milk, cheese and yogurt, with foods that contain *inulin*. Inulin is a type of fiber that helps increase calcium absorption. Pair your favorite milk products with inulin-containing foods, including: asparagus, onions, garlic, whole wheat and rye. Whole-wheat pasta



with garlic and parmesan cheese is a delicious choice, as is cheese on rye crackers.

Fat and Antioxidants

Antioxidants in vegetables may help reduce the cellular damage that can lead to heart disease and cancer. **To help your body absorb antioxidants,** try preparing your vegetables with a small amount of fat from oil or nuts. For example, add:

- › chopped avocado to your tossed greens
- › olive oil to your tomato sauce
- › walnuts to your grilled vegetables

These techniques help you eat a greater variety of healthful foods – and you can get more nutrition from the foods you already love.

And you don't have to change your eating habits. Try some of the combinations listed at left to give you more choices and help you meet your daily needs for produce, fiber, heart-healthy fats and protein.

Recipe of the Month

Lemon Pasta with Cannellini Beans

Enjoy this Middle-Eastern meal high in fiber and flavor!

- 1 lb whole-wheat rotini pasta
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 lb zucchini (4-5 medium) cut into bite-size strips
- 1 tbsp grated lemon peel
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- ½-1 tsp red pepper flakes
- 4 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 cups fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 15-oz cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup chopped fresh mint
- Grated Romano cheese

- 1 While pasta cooks, heat oil slowly in a large skillet.
- 2 Add zucchini, lemon peel, garlic, and red pepper flakes and gently stir-fry on medium-high about 2 minutes.
- 3 Add lemon juice, broth and beans and bring to a boil; cook 2 minutes.
- 4 Drain pasta completely and quickly pour over zucchini mixture; add mint and combine. Serve with a few sprinkles of Romano cheese.

Nutrition Facts

Makes 6 (about 1 ½ cup) servings

Amount Per Serving	Calories	407
	Protein	18.5g
	Total Fat	4g
	Carbohydrate	83g
	Fiber	15g
	Sodium	485mg

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