

# TAKE CHARGE!



May 2023

## Build a Better Body Image

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

**Having a healthy body image means that you feel good about how you look.** The next time you look in the mirror, compliment yourself. Good self-esteem starts with kindness. Maybe you love the shape of your face, the color of your eyes or your arms that can hug loved ones.



**It may sound silly, but positive self-talk can be very helpful.** If you tend toward negative self-talk, ask yourself, “Would I be this harsh if I was talking to my friend?” Treat yourself with the same kindness you give to others.

**Negative self-talk is linked to having a negative body image or poor self-esteem, which can lead to:**

- Eating disorders.
- Depression.
- Anxiety.
- Social isolation.
- Substance abuse.
- Suicide.

**If you struggle with a negative body image, take steps toward self-care.** Seek a therapist or dietitian who specializes in intuitive eating, compassion-focused therapy or cognitive behavioral therapy to learn techniques for self-acceptance.

**Here are three tips that may also help:**

1. Steer clear of fad diets. The billion-dollar weight loss industry is built on false promises. Instead, work on building good eating habits and being active with exercise you enjoy.
2. Avoid harmful social media. Studies show social media posts with idealized images have a negative effect on body image. Fill your feeds with realistic tips on eating well and staying active; avoid digitally altered bodies, unrealistic diets and influencers who promote unhealthy behaviors.
3. Focus on the positive. Download an app with daily positive affirmations, keep a journal with inspiring self-talk or leave yourself notes with uplifting sentiments.



**There are many things to love about yourself.**  
Start looking and see what you find.

### city events

**Nutrition Inclusion: Cultural Norms & Emotional Eating**

**Thursday, May 4**  
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm  
Register [here](#).

**Self-Care: Boosting Self-Confidence**

**Tuesday, May 9**  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Register [here](#).

**Supporting Family Members Living With Mental Health Issues**

**Wednesday, May 17**  
11:30 am – 12:30 pm  
Register [here](#).

**Nutrition Inclusion: Truths About Healthy Eating**

**Thursday, May 18**  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm  
Register [here](#).

**Connecting with Your Resilience**

**Wednesday, May 24**  
12:30 pm – 1:00 pm  
Register [here](#).

### Deferred Compensation Webinars

**Social Security: The Choice of a Lifetime**

**Tuesday, May 16**  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Register [here](#).

**Friday, May 19**  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Register [here](#).

**Estate Planning and Beneficiary Considerations**

**Wednesday, May 17**  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Register [here](#).

**Deferred Comp Online Tools & Resources**

**Wednesday, May 31**  
9:00 am - 9:45 am  
Register [here](#).

**Wednesday, May 31**  
12:00 pm - 12:45 pm  
Register [here](#).



May is Mediterranean Diet Month and High Blood Pressure Education Month.

# Discover the Mediterranean Diet

Imagine a non-drug way to lower the risk of heart attacks, strokes, type 2 diabetes, depression and possibly some forms of cancer and dementia. To top it off, this preventive therapy involves eating foods that most people find delicious.

If you think this sounds like a too-good-to-be-true bit of unproven quackery, think again. It's not a health fad but the way of eating long popular in Mediterranean countries.

## Mediterranean dining in nine practical steps:

1. Make vegetables dominate half of your plate at daily meals.
2. Choose plant-based proteins instead of animal-based proteins a few times per week.
3. Enjoy fish and seafood twice weekly; oily fish, including salmon, mackerel and sardines are good for heart and brain health.
4. Enjoy calcium-rich dairy foods, such as Greek yogurt and fermented cheese (feta, Swiss, Parmesan, ricotta).
5. Include whole grains, such as barley, brown rice, whole wheat and oats.
6. Choose vegetables, fruits or a small handful of nuts as between-meal snacks.
7. Use extra-virgin olive oil for cooking and salad dressings. Other healthy fats are also found in avocados, nuts and seeds.
8. Add flavor with herbs and spices; limit salt.
9. Save red meat and sugary desserts for special occasions. Your heart will thank you for it.

Learn more at [oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets/mediterranean-diet](http://oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets/mediterranean-diet).

The Mediterranean Diet is especially effective for protecting heart health. In addition to promoting plenty of vegetables and fruits, it includes fish, poultry, whole grains, legumes, dairy products and extra-virgin olive oil.

So, why is the Mediterranean Diet good for you? It emphasizes whole, minimally processed foods and filling most of your plate with plants. It leans on herbs and spices rather than salt.



National Women's Health Week is May 14 to 20.

# Postpartum Depression

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Popular culture often highlights the joy of becoming a parent, but it can also be challenging and exhausting. Some degree of anxiety and moodiness is normal. In fact, 50% to 75% of new parents have a period of sadness and crying known as the baby blues, which may appear in the first few days after birth, subsiding within about two weeks.

Postpartum depression (PPD), a more serious condition, can begin anytime during the first year after delivery. Symptoms affect up to one in seven new mothers and include:

- Disturbed sleep.
- Marked change in eating habits.
- Irritability.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities.
- Impaired concentration or decision-making.
- Feeling guilty, worthless or hopeless.

Of course, sleep disruption and other changes are very common after childbirth. When these symptoms are especially numerous, intense or prolonged, an evaluation for PPD may be appropriate.

## Risk factors for PPD include:

- History of depression or PPD.
- Family history of depression.
- Lack of social support.
- Being a teen or single mother.
- Pregnancy or delivery complications (e.g., premature birth).
- Other life stressors, such as relationship conflict, financial problems or recent losses.

PPD can improve with psychotherapy, support groups, home nurse visits or medication. Mothers who have thoughts of hurting themselves or their babies should seek immediate medical care.



May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month.

# Bicycling Benefits

Spring is a perfect time to start bicycling. Although it probably brings back memories from childhood, bike riding is not just for kids. In fact, most people at any age can enjoy bicycling.

While it's great to cycle and enjoy the outdoors, you can also use an indoor stationary bike when the weather isn't great. If you bicycle regularly to visit a friend or run an errand, you'll boost your physical fitness goal almost effortlessly.

Bicycling regularly is a great way to burn calories and lose excess weight. It also builds muscle strength — especially in the legs — and improves balance. Bike riding is low-impact and raises your heart rate slowly. It also puts less pressure on your joints than high-impact workouts.

Because it's an aerobic exercise, bicycling helps strengthen your heart, blood vessels and lungs and can lower your risk for cardiovascular disease. What's more, bicycling has been shown to reduce stress and help relieve anxiety and depression.

If you are new to exercise or have any chronic health problems, talk to your health care provider before bicycling. And practice cycling safety. Wear a good-quality, certified bike helmet, obey all traffic signs and rules and wear bright or reflective clothes so drivers can see you.



# Sugar: Just How Bad Is It?

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

## Is fear of missing out (FOMO) wasting your time and stressing you?

Checking social media constantly and comparing your activities to others can become almost addictive. In fact, Kristin Fuller, MD, writing in *Psychology Today*, notes instant gratification from giving and getting likes on social media increases dopamine, the feel-good neurotransmitter in brains. And studies show many people so fear missing out that they stay glued to their phones and social media even while on vacation. Fuller advises discovering the **joy of missing out (JOMO)** by unplugging from technology regularly — treasure being in nature, spending time with friends in person and living each day your way. No one's life is perfect, and while getting likes can be fun, you can certainly thrive without them.



## TIP of the MONTH

### Translating Grams

Nutrition guidelines say to limit sugar to no more than 12 teaspoons per day. But when you look at the Nutrition Facts panel on a packaged food, the sugar content is listed in grams. That's not very helpful if you're curious how many teaspoons of sugar it contains. **Tip: Every teaspoon of sugar is 4 grams.** So if you want to know how much added sugar is in your packaged food, simply divide the added sugars amount on the Nutrition Facts panel by 4. For example, if your cookie has 12 grams of added sugar, you divide  $12/4 = 3$ . That cookie contains 3 teaspoons of sugar.

**Added sugar is found in about 65% of products on grocery store shelves, and North Americans tend to consume a lot of the sweet stuff.** The trouble is that high-sugar diets — defined as more than 12 teaspoons of added sugar per day — are linked to an increased risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, unhealthy blood cholesterol and some types of cancer.



**However, small amounts of sugar appear to be okay.** If you add a few teaspoons of sugar to coffee or tea, and enjoy the occasional cookie or bowl of ice cream, there's no cause for concern. Studies show that problems begin when you routinely consume in excess of 48 grams (12 teaspoons) of added sugar per day.

**While many celebrities and social media influencers extoll the virtues of their sugar-free diet,** going to extremes to cut every granule of sugar is unnecessary and can add excess stress to your life. Stress is linked to lower immune function, so stressing about sugar isn't good for you, either. Obsession about healthy eating is called **orthorexia nervosa**, and it's a mental health concern.

**Instead of overdoing or eliminating sugar, find a happy medium.** It's okay to enjoy some sweet indulgences, but don't go overboard.

**On average, most Americans consume about 77 grams of sugar daily, which is too much.** The No. 1 source of added sugar is sweet beverages; a can of regular cola contains 40 grams (10 teaspoons) of added sugar. The simplest way to cut back on sugar is to drink water instead of soda, fruit drinks, iced tea or other sweet beverages.

**And it's important to note that natural sugar from fruit does not count toward that 12-teaspoon daily total.** Fruit is packed with fiber, vitamins and minerals, and those beneficial nutrients outweigh the natural sugar content.

## Baked Fish with Herb-Olive Salsa

## EASY recipe

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2 cups fresh chopped cilantro                 | 1 clove garlic, minced                                    |
| ½ cup fresh chopped parsley                   | 4 (6 oz) skin-on fish fillets, such as cod, trout or bass |
| 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, <i>divided</i> | Pinch salt and pepper                                     |
| ¼ cup pitted black olives, chopped            | 1 lemon, sliced into wedges                               |
| 3 tbsp chopped sundried tomatoes              |   |



In a medium-sized bowl, add cilantro, parsley, 2 tbsp olive oil, olives, sundried tomatoes and garlic. **Stir** to combine and set aside. **Season** fish fillets with salt and pepper. In a large pan, heat remaining 1 tbsp oil. **Add** fish fillets, skin side down. **Cook** 2-3 minutes, then flip and cook until opaque, about 2-3 more minutes. **Add** fish to serving platter and top with salsa and lemon juice.

**Makes 4 servings. Per serving:** 275 calories | 32g protein | 14g total fat | 2g saturated fat | 5g mono fat | 5g poly fat | 5g carb | 2g sugar (0 added sugar) | 1g fiber | 398mg sodium

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

**Phone:** 800-871-9525  
**Fax:** 205-437-3084  
**Email:** [PBeditor@ebix.com](mailto:PBeditor@ebix.com)  
**Website:** [personalbest.com](http://personalbest.com)

Executive Editor: Susan Cottman • Advisers: Patricia C. Buchsel, RN, MSN, FAAN; Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, CFP, AFC, MBA; Eric Endlich, PhD; Mary P. Hollins, MS, JD, CSHM; Kenneth Holtyn, MS; Reed Humphrey, PhD; Gary B. Kushner, SPHR, CBP; Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus; Zorba Paster, MD; Charles Stuart Platkin, PhD; Cara Rosenbloom, RD; Elizabeth Smoots, MD; Margaret Spencer, MD • Editor: Aimie Miller • Designer: Sheila Nupen

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Personal Best® 1 Ebix Way, Johns Creek, GA 30097 • 800-871-9525 • fax 205-437-3084.

**Note:** Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date pandemic information visit [coronavirus.gov](http://coronavirus.gov).

- **Health and Day Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Claims:** File any remaining 2021 FSA claims by May 5, 2023, with [Navia Benefit Solutions](#). And remaining 2022 FSA claims are due by October 8, 2023. Submit paperless claims online or via the MyNavia mobile app.
- **COVID Medical Services Coverage:** Effective May 12, 2023, the City's Aetna and Kaiser Permanente plans will continue to cover COVID-19 diagnostic testing, vaccines, and treatment, but they will be subject to your plan's copays, coinsurance, and deductible. See the medical plan [summary chart](#) for more information.
- **Looking for some nutrition tips?** Check out the new nutrition inclusion podcast series on the [Self-Care Spotlight page](#) under the Self-Care through Nourishment section. (11 – 13 minutes)
- **Ready to Quit Tobacco?** Quit for Life on Rally Coach is designed to give you the confidence you need to quit tobacco for good. Get a personalized plan and 1:1 access to coaches via phone, chat, or text. No cost to regular City employees and their adult dependents. Get started at [quitnow.net](http://quitnow.net) or text **START** to **34191**.

## EXPERT advice

— Eric Endlich, PhD

### Q: How to recover from burnout?

**A:** If you feel exhausted and overwhelmed, more often than not you may be experiencing burnout. When the demands on you seem excessive and you don't have the support you need, it's easy to lose motivation.

#### Top tips for managing burnout:

- Give yourself time to recover. Seek out soothing activities, such as meditation, yoga or nature walks.
- Get the help you need, whether from colleagues, loved ones or professionals.
- Take care of your body with quality nutrition, regular exercise and adequate sleep. Avoid unhealthy coping strategies, such as excessive alcohol use or overeating.
- Set appropriate limits. You can't do it all, and it's okay to say no sometimes.
- Develop a plan that will work in the long term. Decide what are your top priorities, and make sure you take regular breaks to recharge.

Seek professional help if needed, and if you have persistent physical symptoms, such as fatigue, ask your health care provider to rule out medical causes.



May is Older Americans Month.



## Choosing a Medical Alert System

As Baby Boomers age, and more medical alert systems are on the market, it can be hard to choose the appropriate one for your or your loved one's needs. There are different types of monitored and unmonitored systems: at-home, wearable on-the-go, traditional or specialized.



**Monitored:** Depending on the type you choose, these systems connect you to a 24/7 call center that fields calls for help, dispatches emergency medical services and contacts loved ones. They frequently offer features, such as fall detection, activity tracking and medication reminders. Monitored systems usually have a monthly charge.

**Unmonitored:** These systems have no monthly fees. They do not use a call center and do not provide additional tracking services. They will connect directly to 911 or your contacts, but they usually lack fall detection, activity tracking, medication reminders and wellness checks.

#### Use these tips to choose the right system:

- Check for a warranty, a money-back guarantee or a contract.

- Check your insurance policy for coverage.
- Be aware of possible fees, such as monthly and annual, shipping, activation and up-front device charges.
- Consider these key features before buying: emergency medical call buttons, automatic fall detection, GPS tracking, landline or mobile connection, water-resistance, device mobility, in-home range, two-way communication and monitoring.
- Optional features to consider include activity tracking, lockbox, medication reminders, remote answering, spouse monitoring and wellness checks.

To learn more, search for **medical alert systems** at [ncoa.org](http://ncoa.org).



**May is National Stroke Awareness Month.** Strokes are a leading cause of death and disabilities in the U.S., but up to 80% of them can be prevented. The American Heart Association has these tips to lower your stroke risk:

- Don't smoke.
- Move more. New to exercise? Start with regular walks.
- Lose excess pounds.
- Eat a healthy diet rich in vegetables, fruit and whole grains; skip excess salt, as well as ultra-processed and fast foods.
- High blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, diabetes and other conditions raise stroke risk.
- Don't skip medications or health care checkups and screenings.
- If you feel like you have an irregular heartbeat consult your health care provider to check you for atrial fibrillation, which is a leading cause of stroke.