

TAKE CHARGE!



May 2022

Asthma Advice



May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month.



Asthma is a chronic condition of the lungs' airways, causing them to narrow and become inflamed. This produces coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing. For some people, asthma is a minor nuisance. For others, it can be a major problem that interferes with daily activities and may lead to life-threatening asthma attacks.

Respiratory viruses, including colds or flu, can worsen your asthmatic symptoms.

If you have moderate-to-severe asthma, your risk of being hospitalized for COVID-19 increases.

While asthma can't be cured, its symptoms can be controlled. And because asthma often changes over time, it's important that you work with your health care provider to track your signs, manage symptoms and adjust treatment as needed.

If you have asthma, you may not know the precautions for reducing symptoms and your risk for asthma attacks and serious illness. As a reminder:

- Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke.
- Avoid air pollution from factories, cars and wildfire smoke.
- Reduce exposure to dust and dust mites.
- Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Use a HEPA air purifier.
- Avoid using sprays.
- Make sure you have good air ventilation.



Sinus infections, allergies and acid reflux can increase asthma attacks. Other triggers: physical exercise, high humidity, breathing in cold, dry air, some foods, food additives and fragrances.

Know the signs that your asthma may be worsening: more frequent, bothersome symptoms; increasing difficulty breathing, as measured with a peak flow meter; and needing to use a quick-relief inhaler more often.

“Somebody was once a nobody who wanted to and did.” — John Burroughs

city events

Increasing Mental Toughness

Tuesday, May 3
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Register [here](#)

Kinside: Finding Summer Childcare

Wednesday, May 11
11:00 am – 11:30 pm
Join [here](#)

Mental Health: Conquering Burnout

Wednesday, May 11
12:30 pm – 1:00 pm
Register [here](#)

Resilience and Resistance: Part 2 Accountability for Sustainability

Tuesday, May 17
11:00 am – 12:30 pm
Register [here](#)

Fear and Anxiety: Moving Forward

Friday, May 20
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
Register [here](#)

ID Theft Protection

Tuesday, May 24
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
Register [here](#)

Motivating Staff and Improving Morale

Wednesday, May 25
11:30 am – 12:30 pm
Register [here](#)

Deferred Compensation Webinars

Social Security: The Choice of a Lifetime

Thursday, May 5
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Register [here](#)

Health Care: Plan for Costs in Retirement

Thursday, May 12
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Register [here](#)

Managing Taxes on Your Retirement Income

Thursday, May 19
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Register [here](#)

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, Safety Corner: Green Thumb, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V5tools.

dollars&sense

TD Tip: Zero-Down Home Loans

By Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, AFC

Down payments are often a deal-breaker for buying a home. Many consumers have steady jobs and good credit, but saving considerable sums of money may be out of reach. Zero-down home loans allow the borrower to purchase a home without having to put money down. While zero-down loans make it possible for consumers to buy houses, they are not a good idea. Below are a few reasons why:

Higher interest rates: Needing a zero-down loan signals to creditors that you are unable to save. Higher interest rates will cause you to pay more over the life of the loan.

More interest: Zero down on a mortgage means that you will pay more in interest over the life of the loan. For example, if you want to buy a home for \$250,000 at 4% interest for 30 years, you will pay \$179,840 in interest over the life of the loan. If you put 5% down on the home and took out a loan for \$237,500, you would pay \$158,240 in interest, saving \$21,600.

Property mortgage insurance (PMI): A zero-down mortgage will mean that you have to insure your loan to reduce the lender's risk. If you owe more than 80% on the value of your house, lenders require you to pay PMI premiums until your loan balance is under 80%. This payment is added to your monthly mortgage payment.

Last word: Save for a down payment on a home; even 3% makes a difference.

The Myth of Multitasking

We can't do two things well at once.

When we multitask, we switch our attention between two tasks, often performing less effectively at both. The idea of multitasking has been around for decades and first referred to using a single computer to simultaneously carry out two or more jobs.

Everyday examples: We text or answer email while in meetings, play video games when chatting with family, take notes during a lecture, drive while talking on our phones or cook dinner while helping our kids with homework. Being a multitasker may be a point of pride for some, implying mental dexterity and effective productivity.

Multitasking can help us save time in some cases, but research suggests that trying to do more than one **challenging** task at a time may decrease our overall productivity instead. Most people tend to work slower and less efficiently when multitasking because of the increased mental demand of jumping from one thing to another.

Staying focused on one task at a time can increase work productivity. If you are dedicated to multitasking, but you start more tasks than you can finish, start prioritizing your tasks in order of importance. Begin with your most demanding assignments and finish your day with lighter and less time-consuming tasks whenever you can.



Fitness Parks

Public parks can be more than places for walks and picnics. In fact, there's a movement to provide accessible fitness equipment in parks and create free fitness parks to promote regular physical activity for more people.

Physical activity is a national health priority, according to the CDC.

Regular exercise lowers the risk for health problems ranging from type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease to depression and anxiety disorders. What's more, as people begin using local parks to exercise more, research shows residents of nearby neighborhoods often are inspired to take the initiative and pursue a healthier lifestyle.



You won't find the high-tech fitness equipment common in indoor gyms at fitness parks, and the equipment available often varies between locations. But, according to research, you are likely to find weather-resistant tools for strength building, balance and aerobic exercise, including ski machines, push-up bars, balance beams, rope climbs and equipment for performing leg presses.

Many communities don't have the resources to build new outdoor fitness spaces in parks. But there's good news: Nonprofit organizations, including FitLot and AARP, are helping towns throughout the U.S. build more outdoor fitness parks so more people can enjoy an active lifestyle.



To see if there's a fitness park near you, visit the **FitLot map** at fitlot.org/parks or search for **outdoor fitness parks** and your location.

Sugar vs. Artificial Sweeteners

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Craving sweets is common, and it's fine to indulge occasionally as part of a nutritious eating plan.

You may wonder whether it's better to choose sweet foods and beverages that are made with sugar or with artificial sweeteners, such as aspartame or sucralose. The truth is, there's no clear winner.

Sugar has 15 calories and four grams of carbohydrate per teaspoon. Nutrition guidelines recommend no more than 12 teaspoons of added sugars per day. Some people prefer the taste of sugar compared to artificial sweeteners, and appreciate that it's more natural rather than artificial. But sugar has been linked with tooth decay, and excess amounts (above 12 teaspoons per day) have been linked to weight gain, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. For context, a can of soda contains ten teaspoons of sugar.

Artificial sweeteners are much sweeter than sugar, but have zero calories and usually no carbohydrates. People with type 2 diabetes may prefer artificial sweeteners over sugar because they have less effect on blood sugar levels. And people looking to lose weight may choose artificial sweeteners due to their lower calorie count. Here's where it gets murky: Some studies show that artificial sweeteners may actually increase the risk of weight gain, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. The research is ongoing.



Bottom line: Choose whichever you prefer, since both are fine in small amounts. But overall, it's best to simply choose fewer sweets, such as soft drinks, candy, pastries, ice cream and chocolate, whether they are made with sugar or artificial sweeteners. These foods are considered treats, not staple foods, so limit your intake no matter how they are sweetened.

One-Pan Baked Shrimp and Vegetables

EASY recipe

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 cups broccoli florets | ½ tsp salt |
| 1 zucchini, sliced | 2 tsp Italian seasoning |
| 1 small red onion, cut to ½-inch slices | 2 cloves garlic, minced |
| 1 yellow pepper, cut into strips | 1½ lb. shrimp, deveined |
| 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil | 2 tbsp finely chopped parsley |
| | 1 lemon, cut into wedges |



Preheat oven to 400°F. **Line** a sheet pan with foil or parchment paper. **In** a large bowl, combine broccoli, zucchini, onion and peppers. **Add** olive oil, salt, Italian seasoning and garlic, and stir to combine. **Pour** the vegetables onto the sheet pan and bake 20 minutes. **Remove** sheet pan from oven. **Add** shrimp to sheet pan and bake 5-8 more minutes or until shrimp are cooked. **Stir** together and add to a serving platter. **Garnish** with parsley and a squeeze of lemon and serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 256 calories | 37g protein | 8g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 5g mono fat | 2g poly fat | 10g carbohydrate | 4g sugar | 4g fiber | 512mg sodium



Learning to recognize a stroke saves lives. During **Stroke Awareness Month**, learn about **FAST**, a quick way to know if someone is probably having a stroke:

- F** – **Face** drooping on one side?
- A** – **Arms** don't both stay upright when raised?
- S** – **Speech** is slurred or strange?
- T** – **Time** to call 911 for urgent medical assistance if you note any or all of the **FAST** symptoms.

Visit the American Stroke Association at stroke.org for more information, including how to lower your risk of stroke.



TIP of the MONTH Vegetables on Your Mind

In addition to well-known benefits for heart health, it turns out that eating vegetables can also benefit our mood. A new study found that people who ate at least three servings of vegetables per day reported better psychological well-being and had higher scores on a subjective happiness scale than people eating fewer vegetables. It's likely a combination of vitamins, fiber and antioxidants that offer this beneficial effect.

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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EXPERT advice — Eric Endlich, PhD

Q: What is talk therapy?

A: Psychotherapy, or talk therapy, is treatment for anxiety, addictions, depression, relationship problems, and other concerns. Often delivered by licensed professionals, such as psychologists or social workers, therapy consists of conversations in which the professional guides you in gaining relief from your symptoms or pursuing your goals.

There are many different forms of therapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, psychoanalysis and family systems therapy. The therapy format can be individual, couples, family or group, and the number of sessions can vary. Most therapy clients experience improvement, depending on factors, including the therapist's skill and the client's willingness to follow through on recommendations.

Most important, however, is a good match, so take time to do your research and shop around to find someone with whom you'll be comfortable working.



News & Notes

Balance Parenting and Work This Summer: Childcare during the summer months may be a challenge to find. Kinside is available to help. Create an account with your City email address or log back in at join.kinside.com/city-of-seattle for real-time childcare openings and more.

Observe Mental Health Awareness Month with WW: WW supports Mental Health Awareness Month and recognizes the importance of self-compassion and acceptance in your well-being journey. Start with two tips:

- 1. Celebrate You!** Research shows that being tough on yourself doesn't work – instead, practice self-love and write down three things about yourself you are grateful for.
- 2. Treat yourself like a friend.** If you're being critical of yourself, consider how you'd react if your friend was speaking about themselves that way. You will likely change your tone.

Regular City employees and covered adult family members can join for as low as \$8.48 per month. Sign up at WW.com/CityofSeattle.

Teens at Work

Teens can benefit from jobs or internships during summer break from school, gaining experience and income.

While they may say, "It's just a summer job," that doesn't mean they don't have a right to a safe workplace. Make sure they come away with a good experience:

Know where your child is working and ask questions about the job.

Teach them to ask questions if they don't understand something or if something seems unsafe.

Remind them that they have the right to a safe workplace.

Encourage them to report hazards or unsafe conditions to their supervisors. **Tip:** You can offer to help them report hazards.

Remind them to wear safety gear required for their job.

Watch for signs of concern, such as increased stress levels, anxiety and fatigue.



National Women's Health Week, May 8 to 14, emphasizes every woman's unique health journey.

Whether you're in your 20s or 90s, or any decade in between, take time this week to learn how to protect and improve your health. The Office of Women's Health at womenshealth.gov offers steps you can take to live your healthiest life at any age, including information on mental health, avoiding disease risks, ways to work exercise into your day, checkups you shouldn't skip, and when to see your health care provider.



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.