

TAKE CHARGE!



October 2023

How to Spot Health Misinformation



The internet provides a fast, convenient way to research reliable health and medical data. Unfortunately, it is also packed with misleading and false claims. A majority of Americans use the internet and social media to find health and medical information — raising concerns about the quality of these sources.

The U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy defines misinformation as any “information that is false, inaccurate or misleading, according to the best available evidence at the time.” Many websites and social media have increased their scope of health content, too often posting data that only resemble trustworthy, legitimate sources. And following misleading or incorrect information about health and medical conditions can harm your health.

Dr. Murthy has said that health misinformation is a serious threat to public health. It leads to confusion, results in increased health problems and health care expense and slows patients’ recovery to good health. Search for health misinformation at hhs.gov.

Use these tips whenever you read health and medical content:

1. Check the **CDC** (cdc.gov) or your local public health department website to confirm the value of the claims made.
2. Reputable non-profits, such as the **American Heart Association** (heart.org), the **American Cancer Society** (cancer.org) and **American Diabetes Association** (diabetes.org), provide current, science-based information for specific diseases.
3. Ask your primary health care provider, nurse practitioner or nurse for confirmation or additional guidance.
4. Search the claim at the **National Library of Medicine** (pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) to learn if it is verified by credible health care sources.
5. Review the **About Us** page on each website for assurance it is a trustworthy source. Look for credentialed professionals, such as medical doctors and dietitians, who review the content.

These steps can help you to better understand, identify and curb misinformation, and help others do the same.

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue’s printable download, **Health Care Visits: Ask Questions**, is at personalbest.com/extras/23V10tools.

city events

Flexible Spending Accounts Information
Tuesday, October 3
 12:00 pm – 12:45 pm Register [here](#)

Wednesday, October 11
 12:30 pm – 1:15 pm Register [here](#)

Open Enrollment: What’s Changing Next Year
Thursday, October 5
 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Join [here](#)

Tuesday, October 10
 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Join [here](#)

Thursday, October 12
 11:30 am – 12:30 pm Join [here](#)

Flu Shot and COVID Booster Clinics
Throughout October. Register [here](#)

Money Attitudes
Tuesday, October 17
 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Register [here](#)

Creating Positive Work Environments
Wednesday, October 18
 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Register [here](#)

A Holiday Planning Guide
Tuesday, October 24
 11:30 am – 12:30 pm Register [here](#)

Overcoming Work Fatigue
Thursday, October 25
 11:00 am – 12:00 pm Register [here](#)

Deferred Compensation Webinars
Understanding Your Deferred Compensation Statement
October 20
 12:00 pm – 12:45 pm Register [here](#)

Deferred Comp Contribution Catch-Up Options
October 26
 12:00 pm – 12:45 pm Register [here](#)

Essential Guide to Cooking Oils

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Choosing the best cooking oils can be confusing with so many varieties available. Understanding the smoke point of oil (the temperature when oil breaks down, begins to smoke and gives food a burnt or bitter flavor) is also important.

Here's how to make informed choices:

Olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fats, which can help lower LDL (harmful) cholesterol levels. Quality extra-virgin olive oil is also high in polyphenol antioxidants, which may help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and metabolic syndrome. Extra-virgin olive oil is flavorful and has a relatively low smoke point of 375°F. Use it for dressings, marinades and low-heat cooking, such as sautéing vegetables.

Avocado oil is high in monounsaturated fats and helps protect against heart disease and inflammation. Refined avocado oil's high smoke point is 520°F; use it for frying, grilling and roasting. Unrefined avocado oil's smoke point is 400°F and has more antioxidants.

Coconut oil contains mostly saturated fat. Most commercial coconut oil contains lauric acid, a type of saturated fat, that may be harmful in

large amounts. Specialty coconut oil contains a healthier medium-chain triglyceride (MCT) saturated fat, which may help manage obesity and boost memory and brain function (look for coconut oil labeled MCT). Coconut oil has a smoke point of approximately 350°F, making it suitable for baking, sautéing and low-heat cooking. MCT has a lower smoke point at 320°F and is best used in smoothies and low-heat cooking.

Canola oil is made from rapeseed plants that are bred to be low in toxic erucic acid. It's flavorless and has heart-friendly fats, including monounsaturated and omega-3 fats. Its smoke point is 400°F and is ideal for high-heat frying and baking.

Flaxseed oil is a high omega-3 oil. It has the lowest smoke point (225°F) and is best used for drizzling onto vegetables, grains or salads,



rather than for cooking. Studies show flaxseed oil may help lower blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol and inflammation, which all help lower heart disease risk.

Other vegetable oils, such as corn, sunflower, safflower, soy and peanut oils (or any combination of these sold as **vegetable oil**), contain a balance of heart-healthy mono- and polyunsaturated fats. Some of these oils are highly refined and processed, leaving them with fewer health benefits than unrefined olive, flaxseed or avocado oil. While fine for occasional cooking, make olive or avocado oil your first choice due to their beneficial monounsaturated fats and antioxidants. Or, choose unrefined vegetable oils when possible

Strength Training for Beginners

Whether you are 19 or 90, run marathons or struggle to climb stairs, strength training can benefit you.

To boost your muscle mass and improve overall health, lifting weights can help you get there. Strength training, also known as resistance or weight training, can:

- Strengthen muscles, bones and joints.
- Help keep metabolism in a healthy state so you burn more calories even at rest.
- Fight the loss of muscle mass and mobility.
- Improve your mental well-being.

When starting a strength training routine, you can use free weights and/or your body weight with certain exercises to provide resistance. Some gyms offer introductory training sessions at little or no cost, or they have trainers available to provide one-on-one coaching.

Most gyms have a combination of resistance machines and free weights, such as dumbbells and barbells. And you can also build a comprehensive weight training workout at home with basic equipment.

Online program: The American Council on Exercise's **Kick Start Workout** is a 12-week online program. Search for **kick start workout** at [acefitness.org](https://www.acefitness.org).

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Basics for beginners:

1. Start with light weights, gradually increasing weight.
2. Rest for a minute between sets.
3. Limit your workout time to 30 minutes, later advancing to 45 minutes.
4. Gently stretch your muscles after your workout.
5. Rest a day or two between workouts.

Note: If you have ongoing health or medical issues (including joint, lung or kidney dysfunction or an elevated risk of heart attack), check with your health care provider before starting a strength training routine.

10.2023 : Live Well, Be Well



National Depression Screening Day on

October 5 is intended to raise awareness and to encourage people to get screened for this condition. Depression can affect anyone, so consider getting screened if you have some of the following symptoms:

- A persistent sad or depressed mood.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities you normally enjoy.
- Changes in appetite.
- Changes in sleep.
- Loss of energy.
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt.
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating, or making decisions.
- Frequent thoughts of death or suicide.

Contact your health care provider if you have several of these symptoms. Effective treatment is available.



TIP of the MONTH

October Sugar Surge

Sugar intake often increases in October with the availability of Halloween candy, and a few treats are fine as part of a **balanced diet**. The main source of sugar in the diet isn't candy; it's sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soft drinks. A new study published in the *British Medical Journal* recommends limiting sugar-sweetened beverages to less than one serving per week (or about six to 12 ounces a week). This level helps reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer.

Adult Picky Eaters

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Picky eating is usually associated with children, but sticking with bland comfort foods can be part of adult eating habits, too. In fact, about 30% of adults identify as picky eaters. Why are some people more selective than others, and what potential solutions can help?



Causes: Picky eating is often established in childhood and can persist. It may stem from a negative food experience (such as choking or food poisoning) or inconsistent lessons about eating while growing up. Some adults may have sensory issues to certain smells, tastes or textures, so they dislike specific foods.

Solutions: While some adults are pleased with limited cuisine, others say that being picky makes it harder during business dinners, parties and travel. If you're looking to curb picky eating habits, here are some ideas:

1. **Learn to feel good about eating.** Sometimes picky eating in adults is accompanied by guilt, shame or fear. It's important to rediscover joy in food, starting with items you enjoy eating. Figure out why you like them (taste, color, texture, etc.) and expand from there.
2. **Work with a dietitian or therapist** who can help with gradual exposure, which means introducing new foods slowly and in small amounts. This method reduces anxiety and encourages openness to new experiences.
3. **Try again and again.** You may need to try food a dozen times before you like it. Choose flavors you already like and add them to the new food you want to try.

Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) is an eating disorder diagnosed when you are picky about or lack interest in food and have nutrient deficiencies. If you suspect ARFID, reach out to the National Eating Disorders Association for help at nationaleatingdisorders.org.

Butternut Squash and White Bean Soup

EASY recipe

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil | 4 cups low-sodium broth |
| 1 onion, diced | 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced | 1 can (15 oz) white kidney or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed |
| 4 cups butternut squash, peeled and diced | 2 cups chopped baby kale |
| ¼ tsp each dried rosemary, thyme and oregano | ¾ tsp salt |



In a large stock pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook 3-4 minutes while stirring. **Add** the butternut squash, herbs, broth and lemon juice. **Cover** and simmer 15-20 minutes until squash is fork-tender. **Add** beans, kale and salt. **Simmer** another 3-4 minutes, then serve warm.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 249 calories | 11g protein | 4g total fat | 0g saturated fat | 2g mono fat | 1g poly fat | 46g carb | 10g sugar (0 added sugar) | 4g fiber | 346mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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News & Notes

Benefits Open Enrollment is October 2 – October 20

- Check plan changes for 2024 in the Open Enrollment Highlights at bit.ly/oepage.
- Enroll online to make benefits changes for 2024. Log into ESS at ess.seattle.gov. Choose Open Enrollment under Benefits.
- Enroll or Re-enroll in a Health and/or Daycare Flexible Spending Account. The Health Care FSA annual maximum will be \$3,050 in 2024.
- Review your AD&D and Life insurance beneficiaries on ess.seattle.gov.
- Attend an Open Enrollment webinar and healthcare panel discussion (*see page 1*).

Extra Incentive to Give Quitting a Try: Earn a chance to win a \$75 Visa gift card by enrolling in Quit for Life by Nov. 19. Quit for Life is a tobacco cessation program available at no cost to regular City employees and adult covered family members. Visit quitnow.net to enroll.



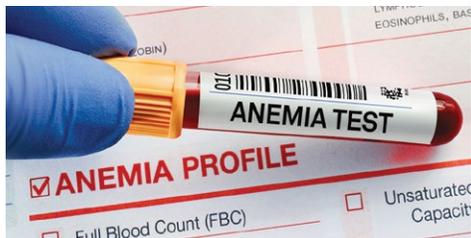
EXPERT advice — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Q: What is anemia?

A: Anemia is a condition that results in an insufficient number of red blood cells. The red blood cells contain hemoglobin, a protein that transports oxygen to all of your organs and tissues. Anemia leads to a deficiency in oxygen delivery to every part of the body.

Anemia symptoms: Common symptoms of anemia include fatigue, weakness and shortness of breath. Pale skin or cold hands and feet may result. Headache, dizziness, an irregular heartbeat or chest pain can also occur with anemia.

When to seek medical care: Contact your health care provider if you have any of the symptoms. Low blood hemoglobin levels or decreased red blood cell counts need to be evaluated by your health care provider. If a problem is confirmed, further testing can distinguish the type of anemia. Iron deficiency, low vitamin B₁₂ or folate levels, inflammation, sickle cell disease and thalassemia are common causes. The treatment varies depending on the specific kind of anemia identified.



National Fire Prevention Week is October 8 to 14.



Surprising Fire Starters

Did you know that dust bunnies (those annoying balls of dust that gather in the corners of rooms) can start a fire? That's right, they can ignite if they catch a spark from an electrical socket or floor heaters. Here are some other surprising fire starters:

Dryer lint: Make sure you clean out lint every time you unload the dryer. And clean the dryer exhaust vent regularly.

Laptops: Laptops can overheat, especially when left on a bed, sofa or other soft flammable surface. Use a desk instead (it's better for you ergonomically, too).

Flour and powdered foods: The dust from these foods can ignite if exposed to an open flame.

Loose fitting electrical plugs: Replace your electrical outlet if plugs keep falling out; the missed connection can ignite a spark that could start a fire.

Nine-volt batteries: Don't store these in your junk drawer, especially near other metal objects, such as paper clips. The battery terminals can short out and cause a fire.



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime, according to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. That's why it's crucial for women to learn about early breast cancer detection, access to care and improved treatments. It's also a great time to learn about breast cancer risks you can't change — such as family history and being female — and those you can potentially modify with regular exercise and healthy diet. If you or someone you care about is overdue for a mammogram, be proactive and get it scheduled.