

High Desert & Inland
Employee – Employer Trust

HOPE Health Letter

“Life Is a Journey. Have Some Fun.”

Keep Your Wits About You

How’s your mental stamina? Do you often lose concentration at work or during conversations? Want to reduce brain fog to improve thinking and learning? Faced with information overload and hectic schedules, many people find their focus drifting away from the task at hand.

You can train your brain to process and recall information more effectively. Practice using these everyday brain aids:

Reduce distractions. Identify one task to focus on and when possible ignore everything else, including your phone, email and interruptions. Tackle complex assignments when you’re most alert.

Keep your mind sharp. Enjoy challenging puzzles daily. Develop hobbies or study new subjects so you’re always learning something different. At work, maybe explore advanced training opportunities.

Nurture healthy relationships. Regular interaction with others may provide the best kind of brain exercise.

Routinely relieve mental tension. Studies have linked chronic stress to memory loss.

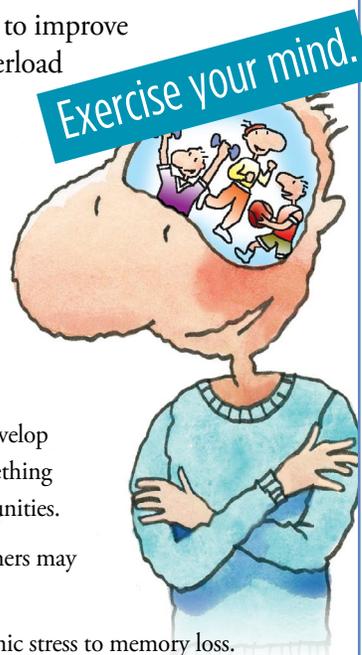
Choose a brain-boosting diet. That includes fish and other lean protein foods, plus plenty of fruit and vegetables every day. Skip alcohol and avoid saturated fats; steady consumption may raise your risk of dementia and impair concentration and memory.

Get seven to nine hours of sleep daily. Sleep deprivation compromises your memory, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and critical thinking skills.

Choose blood-pumping cardio exercise. What’s good for the heart is good for the brain. Exercise breaks can help you get past mental fatigue and afternoon slumps.

Just as your body needs exercise to stay physically fit, your brain needs focused activity to stay mentally fit.

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue’s printable download, [3 Common Fitness Questions](#), is at personalbest.com/extras/20V9tools.



Volume 40 • Number 9 • September 2020

BESTbits



Positive thinking is one of the secrets to living well as we age.

Studies have shown that state of mind can have a big effect on how old you feel and how long you live. Ways to stay positive through each day: Review what and whom you appreciate; identify three things that go well each day; do activities you love; compliment others; and have regular contact with good friends. Start today by celebrating **Healthy Aging Month** in September with a fresh attitude and favorite hobby.



September is Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Traumatic brain injury occurs with a sudden trauma to the brain that impairs normal brain function. Common causes: falls, sports injuries, vehicle collisions and combat injuries. Brain injury symptoms include headache, losing consciousness, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, paralysis, and loss of vision, speech, balance, memory or concentration.



Get your flu vaccination to protect you and your family.

The flu vaccine is safe and takes about two weeks to be effective after you get it. Learn more at cdc.gov.

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 information visit coronavirus.gov.

Sandwiches are wonderful. You don't need a spoon or a plate!

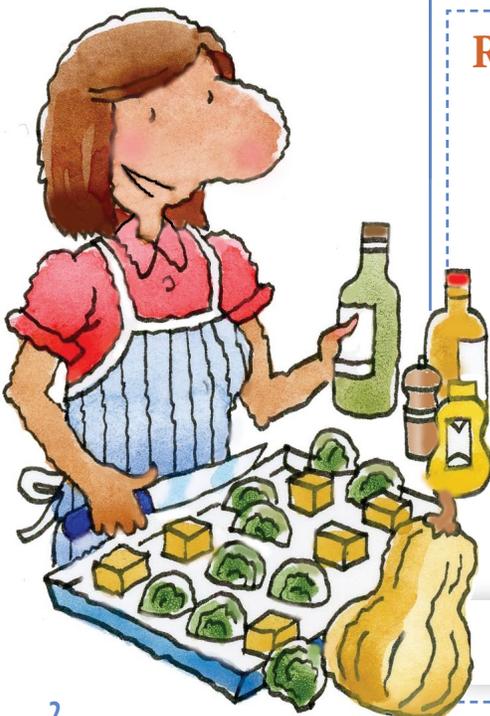
— Paul Lynde



TIP of the MONTH

Soup-er Tips

Autumn is a great season for making soup. Try combinations such as squash + pear; pumpkin + apple; carrot + parsnip; or a hearty beet soup with a dollop of Greek yogurt. Try to make a big pot of soup once a week, and add a serving to any daily meal. It's a tasty way to boost your vegetable intake.



eating smart

September is Fruits & Veggies — More Matters Month.

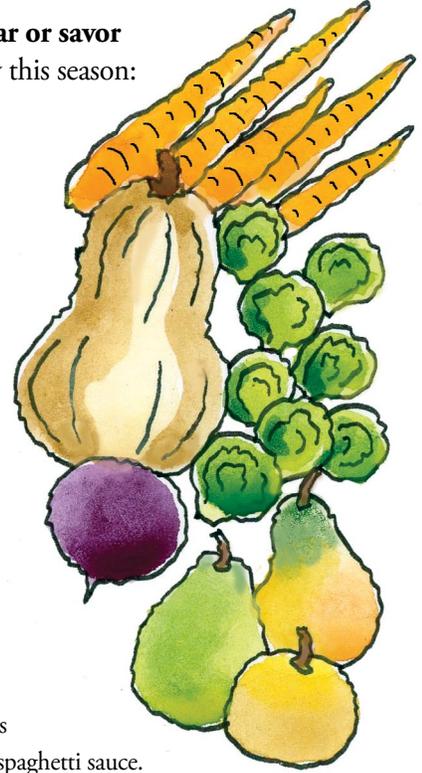


Fall for These Autumn Favorites

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Autumn is the perfect time to bite into a fresh-picked pear or savor a new type of squash. Here are our top favorite crops to try this season:

- **Pears:** Whether you favor Bosc, Bartlett or Anjou, a ripe pear is delicious in salads (pair it with goat cheese), added to soup, or poached for dessert. Pears are ripe when the neck gently yields to pressure from your thumb.
- **Cranberries:** Scarlet red, tart and succulent, cranberries are high in antioxidants including vitamin C. Add these fresh, bright jewels to oatmeal, fruit salad, smoothies and seasonal compotes and relishes.
- **Brussels sprouts:** If you don't love Brussels sprouts, it means you're not making them right. Slice them in half, combine with olive oil, balsamic vinegar and maple syrup, and roast cut-side down at 425°F for 25 minutes.
- **Squash:** From pumpkin to acorn squash, autumn isn't complete until you've enjoyed seasonal squash and their boost of vitamin A. Don't forget to bake the delicious squash seeds for a crunchy snack.
- **Carrots:** These bright orange staples are hardy and sweet. They're in peak season in the fall, and they store well for months. Eat them raw as snacks, bake them into carrot muffins, add to stir-fries and shred into spaghetti sauce.
- **Beets:** Boiled or roasted, beets are delicious, but did you know you can also eat them raw? Shred or thinly slice raw beets for salads, sandwiches and wraps to add a sweet, earthy crunch. Look for beautiful candy cane beets, which have red and white stripes.



Roasted Autumn Vegetables

EASY recipe

3 cups butternut squash, cut into ¾-inch chunks
3 cups Brussels sprouts, sliced in half lengthwise
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
½ tsp salt
Pinch black pepper
¼ cup dried cranberries

¼ cup roasted pecan halves

Dressing:

2 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 450°F. **Line** large (or two small) baking sheet with foil. **In** large bowl, toss together squash, Brussels sprouts, oil, salt and pepper. **Spread** them on baking sheet, making sure Brussels sprouts are cut-side down for initial roasting. **Roast** 15 minutes, then toss and roast 10–15 minutes more or until tender. **Add** to serving platter, and top with cranberries and pecans. **In** a small bowl, whisk dressing and pour over vegetables, tossing to coat before serving.

Serves 6. Per serving: 189 calories | 3g protein | 12g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 9g mono fat | 2g poly fat | 19g carbohydrate | 6g sugar | 5g fiber | 249mg sodium

One of the things that binds us as a family is a shared sense of humor.

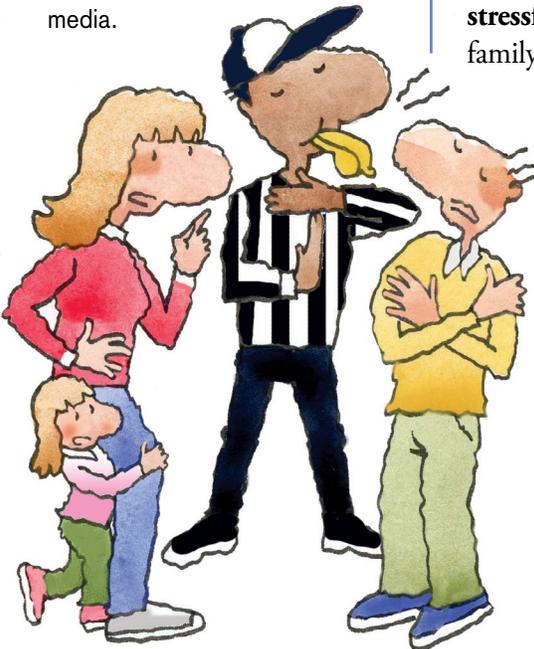
— Ralph Fiennes

Tempted to spend money when you're bored and stuck indoors?

1. Come up with new outfit combinations. If you're tired of your attire, pull out your clothes and come up with new ways to wear them. You may have more outfits than you realize when you pair pieces in new ways.

2. Rearrange your home. Freshen up the look of your living room, family room or bedroom by moving around furniture and wall decor. Recolor your indoor world with a new coat of paint.

3. Make a trade on your neighborhood social media. Offer items in good condition you no longer use (e.g., craft, school and office supplies as well as furniture and tools) in return for things you need on your neighborhood's social media.



work&life

Caregiving Service: What to Expect

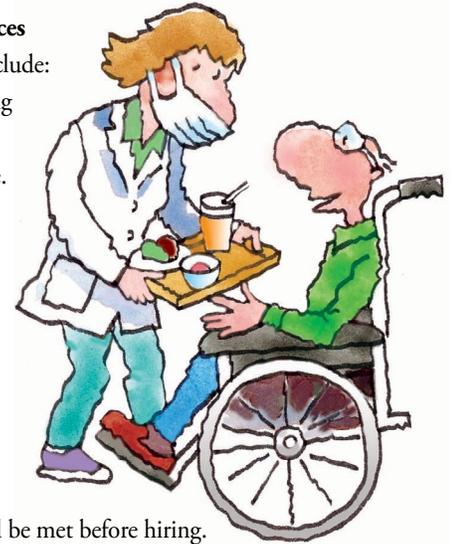
In-home caregiving service is now broadly used in the U.S. Beyond care for the elderly, many families benefit from routine aid for spouses or partners and offspring who are disabled long term or permanently. Caregivers are a blessing for folks who must cope with work while helping their family members remain well and trouble-free as much as possible.

Caregivers can provide in-home attendance and numerous services for families and their patients. Some of the essential duties can include:

- Basic health management, administering medications and tracking health changes.
- Assisting with personal care such as bathing, dressing and exercise.
- Basic food preparation, shopping and housekeeping.
- General patient supervision and companionship.
- Transportation to appointments and wheelchair assistance.

Choosing your health caregiver will require serious thought and planning. Consider some basics:

1. Thoroughly discuss with the patient's primary care provider the type of in-home care management best suited to the patient and your particular situation.
2. Work with a reputable caregiver agency to ensure your needs will be met before hiring.
3. Do a thorough check of the agency and the chosen caregiver background, training and sources.
4. Ask how the agency tracks the progress and completion of your specific care plan.



If you're like many people, you may feel a bit reticent about exposing and sharing your private life and personal living space. Your agency should attempt to match the caregiver to your specific needs and requests. And you can request a trial in-home introduction period of a few days before moving forward.

Learn more at caregiver.org.

Family Squabbles

Petty arguments among family members may rarely be serious, but they can be stressful. Whether kids are arguing over toys or relatives are bickering about politics, family squabbles can escalate, causing hurt feelings and ongoing resentment.

Of course, there's no magic way to ensure everyone will get along. And, if a family member has anger problems and overreacts frequently, it makes sense to seek help from a therapist or psychologist.

However, for most common family squabbles, these strategies can help: **Pause, take some deep breaths and listen.** Instead of immediately becoming defensive or angry — or interrupting to try to reason — listening calmly can help the squabbling person or persons to calm down, too. This approach may take practice.

Remember, relatives don't have to agree. Adult family members bickering over political and other views isn't unusual. If a conversation gets out of hand, agree to disagree and excuse yourself without blowing up.

Turn kids' attention away from squabbling. Whether they are arguing over a toy or what movie to watch, sibling disagreements are common. When tempers flare, don't yell — instruct kids they need a break from each other with separate activities for a while. Family activities involving exercise, such as riding bikes, can help, too.

“The way I see it,
if you want the rainbow,
you gotta put up with
the rain.”

— Dolly Parton



Chronic pain can persist for weeks, months and even years.

More than 25 million American adults experience daily pain from arthritis, injuries, headaches, cancer, infection, neuralgia and other problems. **September is Pain Awareness Month**, an opportunity to raise awareness about this significant health problem and treatments which can help without the use of addictive drugs. Learn more at ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Chronic-pain-Information-Page.

body&mind

Q: How to say ‘no’ to others?

A: Helping others can be fulfilling; overdoing it, however, may lead to burnout. To regain control of your time:

- **Determine your limits.** Perhaps you prefer to have no more than three social engagements per week, or to reserve Sundays for family time.
- **Compose your script in advance.** For example, “My schedule is already full this week,” or “I’m unable to help you with this, but I can suggest other people you might ask.”
- **Buy time if needed.** When a request catches you by surprise, say “Let me think it over and get back to you tomorrow.” Then consider how you’d like to respond.
- **Enjoy the benefits.** Notice how good it feels being in charge of your schedule and workload, and having more time for what matters to you.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD

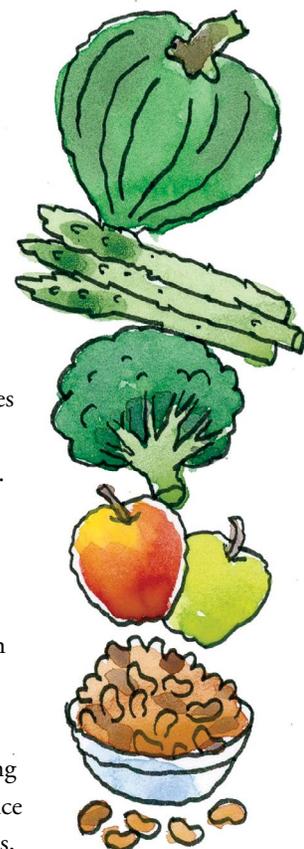


Improve Bowel Function

Improving digestive health can help prevent the discomfort of constipation and diarrhea. There are some conditions, including lactose intolerance (the inability to digest the sugar in milk normally), diverticulitis (inflammation of tiny pouches in the intestinal wall) and irritable bowel syndrome, which can impact bowel function unless treated.

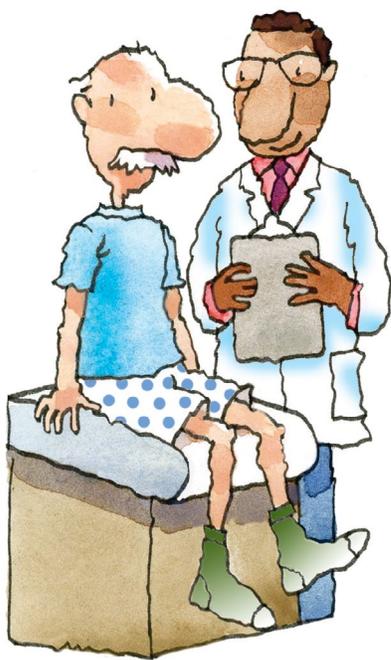
But for most people in otherwise good health, these self-help measures can go far to promote regular and healthy bowel movements:

- **Make fiber-rich meals part of your life.** Most vegetables and whole grains are rich in insoluble fiber, which helps prevent constipation and also reduces the risk of hemorrhoids. Consume foods rich in soluble fiber, such as oats, apples and legumes, which help soften stools and make passing them easier.
- **Drink plenty of water.** Being dehydrated can contribute to constipation. Drinking adequate water (about 30 to 50 ounces a day) helps move food through your digestive tract. Water also aids post-diarrhea dehydration.
- **Skip these foods, especially in excess.** Ultra-processed foods, too many rich sugary sweets, refined grains, fatty meats and overindulging in alcohol or caffeine can cause diarrhea in some people.
- **Don’t rely on laxatives.** If you’re having problems with constipation, relying on laxatives can make the problem even worse. Excess laxative use can reduce your body’s ability to contract on its own to pass stools. Discuss alternatives, such as psyllium, with your health care provider.



“If we don’t change,
we don’t grow. If we
don’t grow, we aren’t
really living.”

— Gail Sheehy



Prostate Cancer Awareness Month is an opportunity to learn about this common cancer. The majority of prostate cancers are found in routine screenings before symptoms appear. Risk factors include family history and age; men between 55 and 69 may benefit most from prostate cancer screening. Learn more at cdc.gov/cancer/prostate/index.htm, and talk to your health care provider to see if screening is right for you.

body&mind

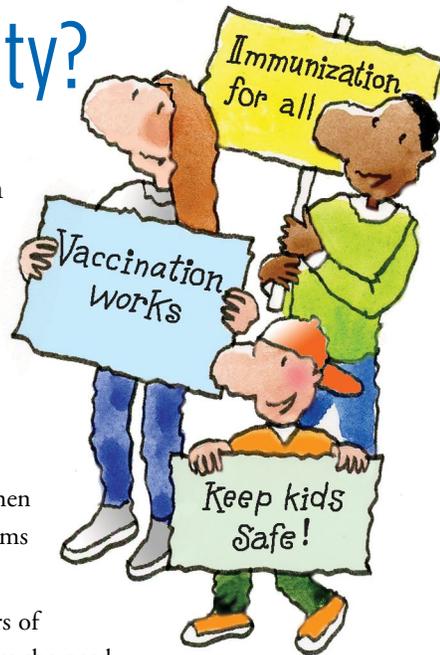
Q: What is herd immunity?

A: **Herd immunity, or community immunity,** refers to the number of people in a group with immunity to an infection. If a large number of people within a group are immune to a virus, those still susceptible are less likely to get infected. Why? The virus has difficulty spreading among a large group of people already immune to it.

Herd immunity protects vulnerable people. The spread of disease slows down when most people do not get or transmit the infection. This helps protect people who are not immune, or who are susceptible to complications. Seniors, pregnant women and people with chronic conditions or weakened immune systems are more susceptible to infections.

Vaccination improves herd immunity. It allows large numbers of people to develop immunity safely and quickly. Vaccines remove the need to contract serious illnesses, such as polio and measles, to become immune.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD



September is National Childhood Obesity Month.

Childhood Obesity

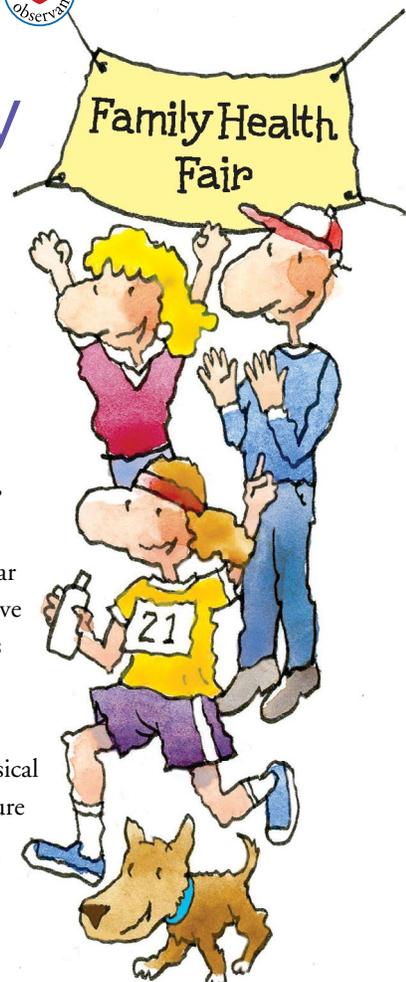
About one in five school-age children is obese, increasing their eventual risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and osteoarthritis.

The CDC and NIH urge parents to learn about preventing childhood obesity and how to help already overweight kids slow down their weight gain. Children who are overweight should not be put on restrictive diets. Instead, work with your child’s pediatrician or a dietitian on a healthy nutrition and exercise plan, and get the whole family on board with healthy habits.

It’s important for parents to set a good example. Practice regular physical activity and healthy eating. Cut back on fast food and serve family meals and snacks with lots of vegetables, fruit, whole grains and protein. Emphasize drinking water instead of sugary drinks and limit high-calorie juices.

Encourage children to play sports, walk a dog, and do other physical activities for at least 60 minutes spread throughout a day. Make sure your child gets at least eight hours of sleep every night, too. Insufficient sleep raises the risk of obesity later in life.

Learn more at cdc.gov/healthyweight/children/index.html.





Food Safety Dates Explained

Here's a lesson in food packaging dates. They are printed on food labels and include best if used by, use by* and sell by, indicating when foods are the freshest or best quality, but not when they are unsafe to consume. Expiration dates should be clearly labeled, indicating when food products should be tossed, according to the FDA.

*Exception: Baby formula labels display a use by date that should be adhered to.

Here's how to keep store-bought food safe for consumption:

Purchase foods before their expiration dates.

Separate raw foods from other foods in your shopping cart, bag and refrigerator.

Bring home and refrigerate perishable foods immediately after purchasing. (Use an insulated bag or cooler on the way home to keep it safe in hot weather.)

Follow safe handling recommendations, such as keep refrigerated after use or thaw in refrigerator.

Wash your hands before and after handling foods, and after leaving the grocery store.

Learn more at heart.org and fda.gov; search for food expiration dates.



Child Passenger Safety Week is September 20 to 26.

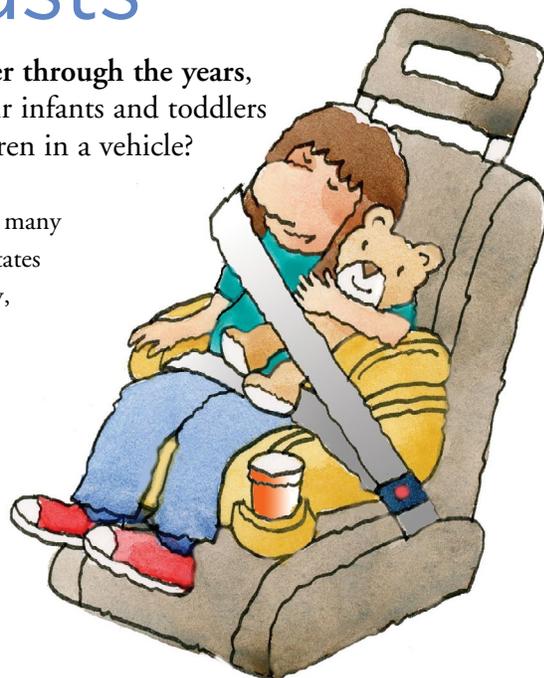


SAFETY corner

Car Seat Musts

Car seat regulations have become stricter through the years, and most parents know how to keep their infants and toddlers safe. But how do you protect older children in a vehicle?

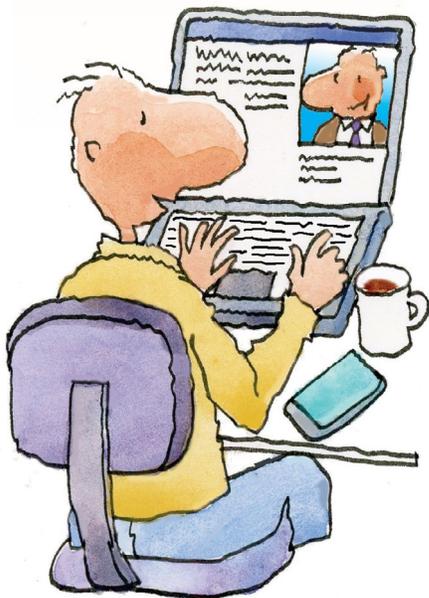
After outgrowing their forward-facing car seats, many kids move on to a booster seat. However, most states only require using them until age eight. In reality, using them should depend on height and weight, not age. The nonprofit SafetyBeltSafe USA recommends that children remain in a booster seat until they are 4'9" tall and reach 80 pounds. Otherwise the seat belt will not fit or restrain them properly. Use the 5-Step Test at carseat.org to find out if your child needs a booster.



Top Dollar Dictionary: Virtual Financial Planning

By Jamie Lynn Byram, MBA, AFC, MS

In the past, financial planning focused on sitting with clients in person, discussing strategies for personal financial goals and challenges. However, technology now offers virtual financial planning. Planners use web-based technology to serve clients regardless of where the client or planner is. The only change from traditional planning to virtual planning is that you video conference with your planner instead of in person. This new format allows planners to reach clientele who can't meet with them otherwise.



Life is like a coin. You can spend it any way you wish, but you only spend it once.

— Lillian Dickson



How's Your Cholesterol?

By Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus

Your cardiovascular health is dependent on strong, healthy blood cholesterol levels.

Since high LDL (bad) cholesterol and low HDL (good) cholesterol have no symptoms, you won't know if your level is unhealthy without having it checked. A blood test is the only way to detect it.

Depending on risk factors you may have for abnormal cholesterol, get tested every four to six years after age 20, unless your health care provider tells you otherwise.

The blood test measures:

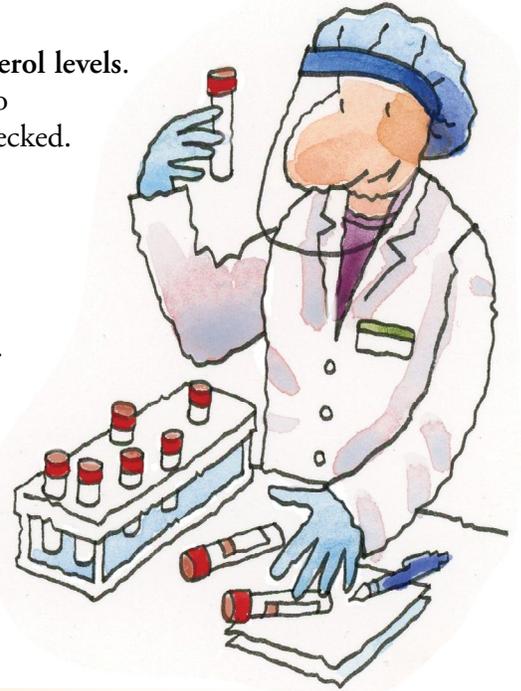
LDL levels: LDL (low-density lipoprotein) is the main source of blockages in the arteries.

HDL levels: HDL (high-density lipoprotein) helps remove LDL cholesterol.

Total cholesterol: Your total blood cholesterol score is calculated by adding your HDL and LDL cholesterol levels, plus 20% of your triglyceride level.

Triglycerides: This is a type of fat in your blood. According to some studies, high levels may raise the risk of heart disease, especially in women.

Test results: If your blood cholesterol levels aren't within desirable ranges, your provider might recommend more frequent testing, especially if you have a family history of heart disease or other common risk factors.



QUIKRISK™ ASSESSMENT:

Check the following common risk factors for unhealthy cholesterol and heart attack that apply to you:

- high blood pressure
- type 2 diabetes
- increasing age
- smoking
- overweight or obese
- lack of regular physical activity
- diet high in ultra-processed foods with lots of sugar, salt and saturated or trans fat
- diet low in vegetables and fruit
- family history of heart disease

While you can't do anything about your age or family history, you can work with your provider to get the other risk factors under your control. This is key to protecting your heart and health.

PROACTIVE Approach to Better Cholesterol and Better Health

Along with a more nutritious diet and weight loss, staying physically active may help reverse unhealthy cholesterol. Exactly how exercise helps improve cholesterol levels is unclear.

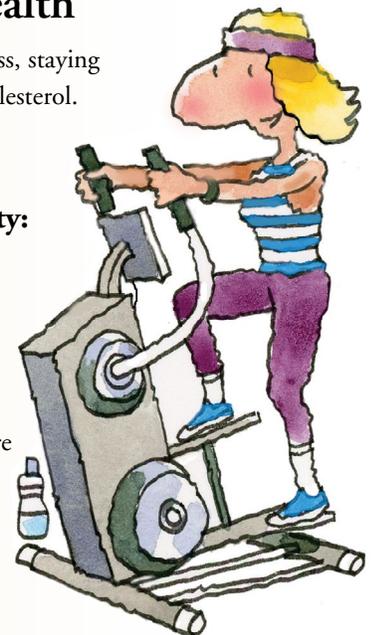
Studies suggest regular physical activity:

- Lowers triglycerides (a type of blood fat).
- Increases HDL, the good cholesterol.
- May not have much impact on LDL, the bad cholesterol, unless you combine it with dietary changes and weight loss. If you have risk factors listed at left, check with your health care provider before starting an exercise program.

The type of exercise needed to lower

cholesterol? The American Heart Association and the American College of Sports Medicine recommend that people do repetitive aerobic (cardio) exercise most days of the week using multiple muscle groups. Examples include cycling, swimming, walking, elliptical machines and step machines.

Weekly exercise goal: Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity (e.g., brisk walking) or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity (e.g., jogging) throughout your week.



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September Fill-in-the Blank Puzzle

Find out how well you know the topics covered in this issue of the newsletter.

- 1 Varieties of _____ include Bosc, Bartlett and Anjou.
- 2 Most vegetables and whole grains are rich in _____.
- 3 Foods rich in _____ fiber include oats, apples and legumes.
- 4 _____ pain can persist for weeks, months and even years.
- 5 _____ improves herd immunity and allows large numbers of people to develop immunity safely and quickly.
- 6 About one in five school-age children is _____.
- 7 Men between 55 and 69 may benefit most from _____ cancer screening.
- 8 Get your _____ levels tested every four to six years after age 20, unless your health care provider tells you otherwise.



You'll find the answers at personalbest.com/extras/Sep2020puzzle.pdf.

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **3 Common Fitness Questions**, is at personalbest.com/extras/20V9tools.

Dr. Zorba's corner

Take care of your health.

That means using some of the best things we have in medicine to prevent disease: immunizations. This time of the year, it's important to get vaccinated against the flu. Today's flu shots are safer than ever. And don't forget other vaccinations you or your children may need. Immunizations help prevent serious diseases, including cervical cancer, meningitis, pneumonia and shingles, to name a few. In this pandemic age, immunizations are the No. 1 way to keep safe. Three more things that can help strengthen your immunity: Stop smoking, start exercising and eat a more **Mediterranean Diet** (search for it at heart.org).

— Zorba Paster, MD

Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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