

# HOPE

## healthletter®

VOL. 34, NO. 12

*"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."*

DECEMBER 2014

## Separating flu facts from fiction

Yep, it's here.  
Cold and flu season.

*For all the attention that colds and flu get each year, many people still don't fully understand these contagious conditions. It's time to set the record straight so you can hopefully avoid getting sick.*

**Myth:** You can get the flu from the vaccine.

**Truth:** The vaccine is made from an inactivated influenza virus that can't transmit infection. If people get sick after getting a flu vaccination, they were going to get sick anyway.

**Myth:** Healthy people don't need to be vaccinated.

**Truth:** Anyone can benefit from being vaccinated. The flu vaccine is recommended for anyone older than six months, even healthy people who might spread the virus to others who are more vulnerable to complications from the virus.

**Myth:** You can't spread the flu if you're feeling fine.

**Truth:** Between 20% and 30% of people carrying the virus have no symptoms.

Source: Harvard Medical School

**Myth:** If you get the flu vaccination, you're covered and don't need to do anything else to protect yourself from the flu.

**Truth:** Even if you have had a vaccination, play it safe. Avoid contact with people who have the flu, wash your hands regularly, and avoid touching your face.



### Quick-Read!

#### Top healthful holiday foods

Check out a list of holiday dinner and party foods you can enjoy without fear of scale sabotage. Pg. 2

#### Make exercise a ritual, not just a habit

This may help you through weak moments when you might be tempted to skip a workout. Pg. 3

#### Trade secrets a burglar won't tell you

Outsmart would-be thieves so they can't gain access to your home. Pg. 4

#### Mental-health moments

Learn how to keep yourself as emotionally and mentally healthy as possible throughout your day. Pg. 5

#### The 4-part financial resolution plan

Start out 2015 with a money-smart strategy. Pg. 6

#### Easier said than done

Get through holidays without going off the deep end. Pg. 7

#### Get full on fewer calories

Discover ways to eat less without feeling like you're giving up anything. Pg. 8

*"Read non-fiction to expand your mind. Read fiction to expand your imagination."*

— Author Unknown

# OuterAisleFresh: Cooking for one

Most recipes are designed to feed four to six people, so what happens if you live alone and often have solo suppers?

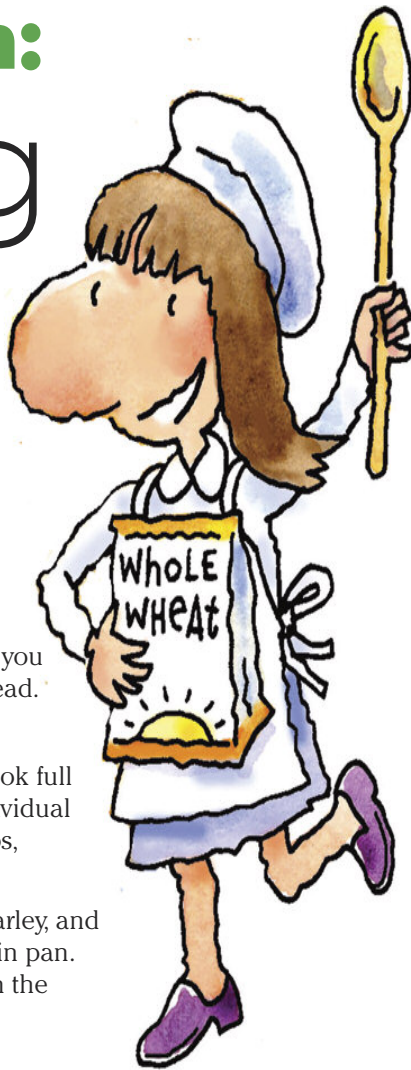
Many times, people who live and eat by themselves turn to prepackaged, processed foods or head for the drive-thru.

Just because you live by yourself doesn't mean you should cut out cooking and go for takeout instead.

*Become a freezer fan.*

- Instead of trying to scale down recipes, cook full recipes. Eat a serving, and freeze the rest in individual containers. Dishes that freeze well include soups, chili, pasta, and extra vegetables.
- Cook whole grains, such as brown rice or barley, and freeze them in individual portions using a muffin pan. Once frozen, remove the whole-grain discs from the pan and store them in zip-top freezer bags.
- For English muffins or loaves of bread, wrap them tightly in plastic wrap to prevent freezer burn.
- Use frozen produce, which can be just as nutritious as fresh but won't spoil. Make sure to choose options without added sauces and sugar. Because they're already chopped, frozen fruits and vegetables are ready to add to smoothies, soups, and stir-fries.

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



## Top healthful holiday foods

Here's a list of holiday dinner and party foods you can enjoy without fear of scale sabotage.

- **Turkey** — It's a great source of lean protein and contains high levels of potassium, zinc, vitamin B, and folic acid. Stick to four ounces of skinless, white meat, and skip the gravy.
- **Sweet potatoes** — Unless the orange spuds are swimming in butter or covered in marshmallows, sweet potatoes can be one of the healthiest veggies around. Opt for a small drizzle of maple syrup or agave nectar if you need any extra sweetener at all.
- **Nuts** — If you see dry roasted nut mixes at a party (*preferably unsalted*), go for those instead of chips and dips or crackers and cheese.
- **Red wine** — If drinks are offered at a party, choose a red wine. With 100 calories per serving and disease-fighting antioxidants, it's a win-win. Just don't overdo it. Have only a glass or two.

Sources: American Heart Association, National Institutes of Health

## Warm Sweet Potato, Apple, and Sausage Salad

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
- ½ cup onion, cut into thin wedges
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- ½ lb. cooked smoked turkey sausage, cut diagonally into ½-inch-thick slices
- 2 medium apples, cut into wedges
- ½ cup bottled sweet-and-sour sauce
- ½ tsp. caraway seed
- 6 cups fresh spinach

In a large skillet, cook sweet potatoes and onion in olive oil over medium heat for about 10 minutes, or until tender, stirring occasionally.

Stir in sausage, apples, sweet-and-sour sauce, and caraway seed. Cover and cook over medium heat for about 3 minutes, or until apples are tender and sausage is heated through, stirring occasionally.

Place spinach on a large serving platter. Top with sweet potato mixture. Serve immediately.

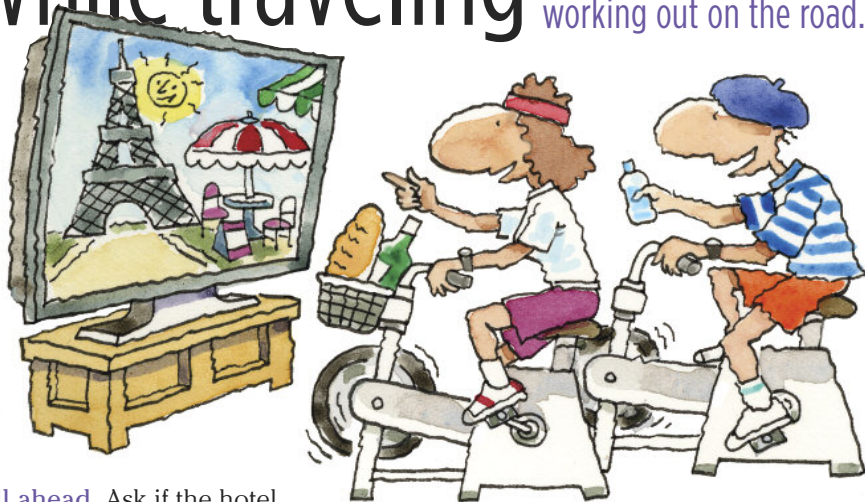
**Serves 6. Per serving:** 209 calories, 8 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 23 mg cholesterol, 502 mg sodium, 27 g carbohydrates, 7 g protein



# GetMoving:

## Simple tips for exercising while traveling

Follow these easy tricks for working out on the road.



**Call ahead.** Ask if the hotel has free weights, updated equipment, a sauna, or a pool. If not, ask if there is a health club or running trail nearby. Otherwise, consider switching hotels.

**Pack smart.** When staying at a hotel or relative's house without fitness equipment, pack a few small weights, resistance bands, or jump rope. Carve out 20 minutes of time for exercise before carving the holiday ham. It's better than nothing.

**Be realistic.** Travel fitness isn't about losing weight; exercise to maintain weight. Be realistic about your goals.

**Be creative.** If your hotel TV has a DVD player, pop in a workout DVD and exercise right in the room. If there's no DVD player, use your laptop.

 Looking for a quick, 15-minute workout routine, no equipment required? Go to [Dec.HopeHealth.com](http://Dec.HopeHealth.com)

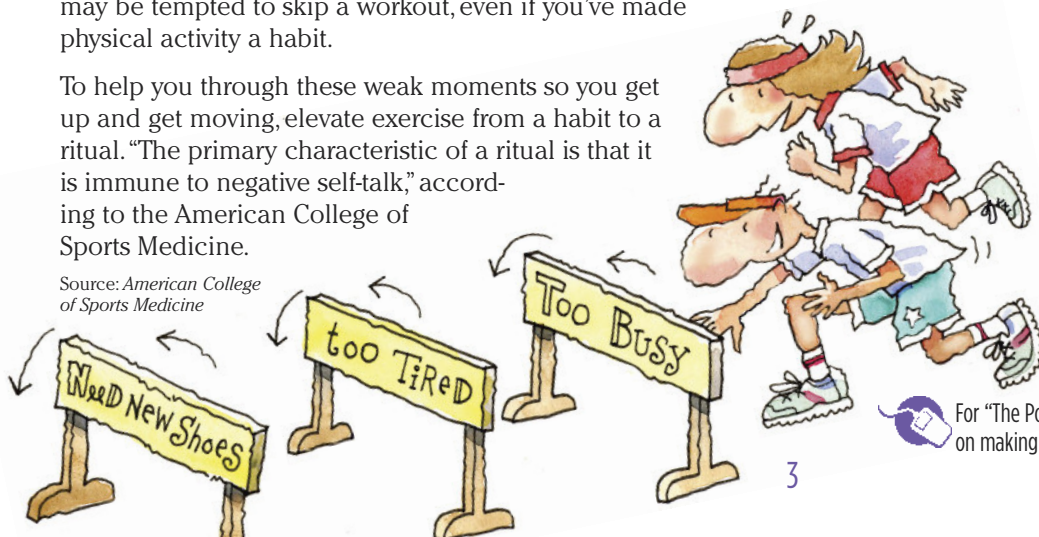
Source: American College of Sports Medicine

## Make exercise a ritual, not just a habit

Do you ever hear a voice in your head telling you, "You don't have time to exercise today; you're too busy"? It happens. At times like these, you may be tempted to skip a workout, even if you've made physical activity a habit.

To help you through these weak moments so you get up and get moving, elevate exercise from a habit to a ritual. "The primary characteristic of a ritual is that it is immune to negative self-talk," according to the American College of Sports Medicine.

Source: American College of Sports Medicine




## Questions to ask before starting an exercise program

If you want to begin exercising regularly, stop to ask yourself some questions.

- Have you been told you have a heart condition and should only participate in physical activity recommended by a doctor?
- Do you feel pain (or discomfort) in your chest when physically active? When you aren't participating in physical activity? While at rest, do you frequently experience fast, irregular heartbeats or very slow beats?
- Do you ever become dizzy and lose your balance, or lose consciousness? Have you fallen more than twice in the past year?
- Do you have a bone or joint problem that physical activity could worsen? Do you have pain in your legs or buttocks when walking?
- Do you take blood pressure or heart medications?
- Do you have any cuts or wounds on your feet that don't heal?
- Have you experienced unexplained weight loss in the past six months?
- Do you know of any reason why you shouldn't participate in physical activity?

If you answered "no" to these questions, you likely can safely participate in at least moderate-intensity physical activity (*what you can do relatively comfortably for up to 60 minutes*). If you answered "yes" to any of the questions, you may want to consult with your health-care provider before beginning to exercise.

Source: American Council on Exercise

 For "The Power of Positive Rituals" worksheet, focusing on making exercise a ritual, go to [Dec.HopeHealth.com](http://Dec.HopeHealth.com)

# The Whole You: PHYSICAL HEALTH

## Banishing bloat

Food is present at every holiday get-together; it just wouldn't be festive without it, right?

But what won't put you in a joyful mood are those feelings of extreme fullness and sluggishness that can show up shortly after the party. Here are some holiday dos and don'ts to avoid bloating.

### Don't:

- Drink too much liquid.

This can be hard, especially when attending parties where wine and spiced punch are flowing. But consuming too much liquid while eating can make you feel bloated and delay digestion.

### Do:

- Reach for water instead of soft drinks. Soft drinks contain chemicals, caffeine, and sugar, which can contribute to belly bloat and feeling full. Sip on water instead, at least while you're eating.
- Watch your salt intake. Snack smart during the holidays. Foods such as olives, chips, processed cheeses, and meats have significant amounts of salt, which can lead to bloat and water-weight gain.

Sources: *International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders; Brigham and Women's Hospital*

## When the lights go out

If you lose power, you need to take steps to keep you and your family safe from food poisoning.

- A half-full freezer generally will hold food safely for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours. Don't open the freezer door unless you must.
- For refrigerated items, pack milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, and spoilable leftovers in a cooler surrounded by ice.
- Check with local authorities to be sure the water supply is safe to use and drink.

Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*



## Trade secrets a burglar won't tell you

*Home-invasion experts are clever and creative when it comes to gaining access to your home. Be alert.*

- During the day, they will often first knock on your front door. If you don't answer, they try the door. If it's open, they walk right in.
- They like to look in windows at night. Burglars are looking for signs that you're home, and for flat screen TVs or gaming systems. Burglars will drive or walk through neighborhoods after dusk, before people close their blinds, to pick targets.
- They look for security systems, so don't let your alarm company install the control pad where a burglar can peer in to see if it's set.
- They may leave fliers in your front door to see how long it takes for you to remove them. If you don't take them down, they assume you're not home.
- They comb social media. Avoid announcing your vacation on your Facebook page. It's easier than you think to look up your address.



For a burglary prevention guide, go to [Dec.HopeHealth.com](http://Dec.HopeHealth.com)



Never go to a party hungry. Eat some fruit, vegetables, or nonfat yogurt before you leave. You'll be less likely to overindulge at the get-together.





## The Whole You: EMOTIONAL HEALTH

# Mental-health moments

Keep yourself as emotionally and mentally healthy as possible throughout your day by:

- Accepting who you are. Don't compare yourself to others, and eliminate all negative self-talk.
- Talking about your problems. Find someone with whom you can share any struggles or negative feelings. Sometimes, just being able to express out loud what you're feeling can be cleansing to your mind.
- Keeping active. Find things you like to do and do them instead of dwelling on negative feelings, problems, or stress.
- Connecting with friends. Spend time with others enjoying activities and conversations. Humans were created to be social, so take time to be social (*and not just on electronic networks*).
- Learning a new skill. Maybe it's sewing, painting, or a new language. When you expand your mind and talents, you may find your attitude is positively impacted, too.

## 4 ways to re-energize your relationship with a significant other

Making small adjustments to how and when you interact with that special person in your life can strengthen your relationship.

1. Put away your cellphones. Give each other your undivided attention.
2. Find 10 things you really love about him/her and tell him/her.
3. Always ask about the other person's day, and listen to his/her response.
4. Pitch in. Help each other with chores and tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, re-organizing, etc., so mundane tasks don't primarily fall to one of you or the other.

## Are you addicted to sugar?

According to health experts, the average American consumes about 11 teaspoons (*almost half a cup*) of sugar daily. Sugar addiction may be a real phenomenon. And in recent years, the number of people affected has grown significantly.

We get a majority of our sugar from soft drinks, candy, cakes, cookies, pies, fruit drinks, dairy desserts such as ice cream, and sweetened grains such as waffles and pancakes.

**Signs of sugar addiction include:**

- Craving/eating sugary foods even when you're not hungry
- Feeling tired
- Eating more of a certain food to quiet emotions or stress

*The good news:* We can do something about our sugar intake. Some experts suggest those with sugar addictions cut out sugar altogether, because getting even small amounts of sugar can keep the addiction active. Short of that, cutting out candy and soft drinks will drastically cut sugar intake and can positively affect your health. Be mindful of labels, and read not only the nutritional content but the ingredients, too. If sugar is a leading ingredient, you may want to put the food back on the shelf.

Sources: American Heart Association, National Institutes of Health



# FiscalFitness:

# The 4-part financial resolution plan



Source: American Institute of CPAs

The beginning of the year is an ideal time to evaluate your financial health and take action to get it in better shape if needed.

**1. Plan ahead** — Take a look at any additional expenses you likely will have over the coming year. Will you need to buy a new appliance? Replace your roof? List all the “extras,” including vacations you might want to take or gifts you’ll want to buy. Make a priority list and determine which expenses are “musts” and which expenses you could scrap, if needed. Figure out how much you’ll need to save to pay for them.

**2. Track everything** — Keep a tally of what you spend for a month to give you a better idea of how much you’re spending on what, so you can make cuts. Once you know what you’re spending, you can also develop a realistic monthly budget.

**3. Start small** — Instead of trying to totally revamp your financial habits all at once, take baby steps. Eliminate a coffee-shop stop one week; bring your lunch from home the next week. Put the money you saved into an account.

**4. Commit** — Pledge to stick to positive financial behaviors. When you find yourself “in the moment” and are tempted to spend when you know you shouldn’t, remind yourself of your goals to become and remain financially healthy.



## The 6-step buying strategy for big-ticket items so you don’t break the bank

**1. Define your goal**, being as specific as possible. Why do you need to purchase this item? What do you hope to accomplish with it?

**2. Determine your criteria**. What features must it include? What features aren’t necessary?

**3. Choose two or three options**. Eliminate any options without your must-have features.

**4. List the pros and cons** for each of your options. Include price and features.

**5. Decide which option is best**. Which one best meets your criteria and your budget?

**6. Evaluate your purchase and plan ahead**. Did you stay within budget? What is the next big item you may need to buy? Begin saving for it now so you’re financially ready when the time comes.



## Helping others when you’re strapped for cash

What can you do to lend a hand to others while safeguarding your own family’s financial health? Donate your time.

Many charities have minimal paid staff, so your time and expertise may be just as valuable as money. Organizations that can match you with local charities include:

- Network for Good [networkforgood.org](http://networkforgood.org)
- Volunteer Match [volunteermatch.org](http://volunteermatch.org)
- Volunteer Solutions [volunteersolutions.org](http://volunteersolutions.org)

Although you can’t deduct your time for tax purposes, you can deduct mileage and certain expenses related to your volunteering at IRS-qualified, tax-exempt organizations. IRS Publication 526 details tax deductions for charitable work, and Publication 78 lists all IRS-approved organizations ([irs.gov](http://irs.gov)).

Source: *Practical Money Skills for Life™* (VISA)

# IssueInsight:

## Easier said than done

Jennie Schuman is probably a lot like you. She juggles work and family commitments, and tries to squeeze healthy living into her hectic schedule when she can. Follow along on Jennie's Health Journey.

Parties, presents, family, and going for that "Rockwell Christmas"? Sounds like a "Calgon, take me away" moment. This time of year is always frantic and hectic. These are the times when taking care of you needs to be a top priority. For some reason, we (*especially women*) put ourselves aside and make sure everyone and everything else gets taken care of, and we lose ourselves in the process.

I have six suggestions that may help you get through the season without going off the deep end. To find out what those six ideas are, go to [Dec.HopeHealth.com](http://Dec.HopeHealth.com).



**Tool Box** Your Source for Cool Tools & Resources

Go to [Dec.HopeHealth.com](http://Dec.HopeHealth.com) to find:

- A parent's flu guide
- A 15-Minute Workout print-and-post tip sheet
- "The Power of Positive Rituals" worksheet
- A burglary prevention guide
- The Crossword Workout answer key



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If you have a question or comment on a story, or a suggestion for topics you'd like to see covered in a future issue of the newsletter, leave a comment on our Facebook page.

The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your healthcare providers, not to replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

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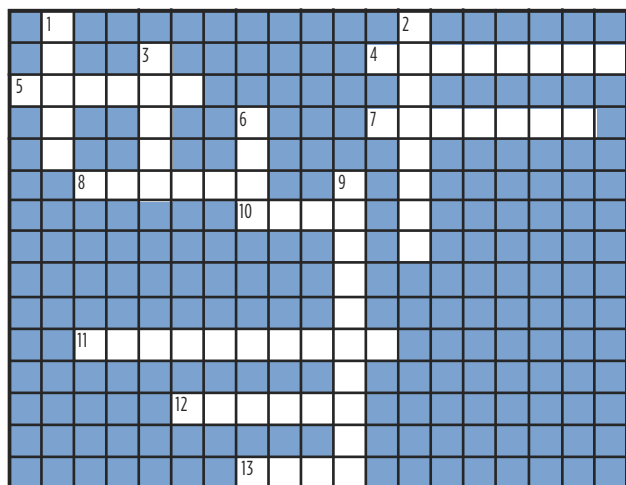
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## Crossword Workout —

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

### ACROSS

4. Fitness when traveling shouldn't be about losing weight; instead, exercise to \_\_\_\_ weight.
5. A great source of lean protein often served at a holiday dinner
7. After a big meal, consider doing this
8. Immune to negative self-talk
10. Donate this to charities if you can't donate money
11. How many hours a full freezer will hold food safely when the power is out (*spelled out, no hyphen*)
12. The average American consumes \_\_\_\_ teaspoons of sugar daily (*number, spelled out*).
13. A healthier alternative to chips and dip at a party

### DOWN

1. Frozen vegetables are good for adding to \_\_\_\_.
2. Avoid announcing this on social media
3. Ask a healthcare provider before starting an exercise routine if you have this type of condition
6. Watch your intake of this to avoid feeling bloated
9. To help re-energize relationships, put away these

For the crossword puzzle answer key, go to [Dec.HopeHealth.com](http://Dec.HopeHealth.com)



Make a playlist of your 10 favorite songs. A song is usually about three minutes long. Take a walk — on a treadmill, in a mall, or outside — for the length of your entire playlist. You'll have in your 30 minutes of daily exercise.

# HOPE HEALTH LETTER

## Weight Control: Get full on fewer calories

It's easy to overdo it on eating during the holidays. If you plan ahead and are mindful, though, you may be able to conserve calories — without feeling like you're giving up anything.

- Fifteen minutes before a big meal, drink a 16-ounce glass of water.
- Take a *small* sampling of everything. A satisfying taste may curb your desire for more.
- After finishing your first plate, talk and enjoy the company of friends and family for at least 15 minutes before heading for second helpings. This delay can allow your stomach time to tell your brain that it's been satisfied.
- If you go for a second plate of food, select the healthiest options available, such as vegetables without added sauces.
- Start a new tradition. After the big meal, take a long walk. The exercise will burn calories from your dinner and make you feel less guilty about your splurges.

*“Winter is the season in which people try to keep the house as warm as it was in the summer, when they complained about the heat.”*

— Author Unknown

*“Anyone who believes the competitive spirit in America is dead has never been in a supermarket when the cashier opens another checkout line.”*

— Ann Landers

*“The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.”*

— Author Unknown

*“A bargain ain't a bargain unless it's something you need.”*

— Sidney Carroll

