

# SMART Health

MAY 2019

## Physical Activity for Life

Official exercise guidelines are updated as we're learning more about how physical fitness and exercise affect our health and longevity. New evidence-based studies show we can fight many of our most common chronic health problems simply by staying physically active.

### Key Recommendations:

#### AGES 3 TO 5 (NEW):

Get at least 3 hours **per day** of active play (light, moderate or vigorous) to enhance growth and development.

#### AGES 6 TO 17 (NO CHANGE):

Get 60 minutes **per day** of moderate- to vigorous-intensity activity for healthy heart, muscle and bone development.

#### ADULTS (NO CHANGE):

Get at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity **each week**; add muscle strengthening 2 to 3 days a week.

**Just move more and sit less.** There is no minimum exercise time requirement now. The new guidelines suggest *any* amount of physical activity has health benefits, including better sleep, stress relief and improved blood pressure and mental health. Over time, staying physical helps manage many ongoing health conditions including obesity, osteoarthritis, diabetes and dementia.



May is Physical Fitness and Sports Month, a good time to learn more at **Move Your Way** at [health.gov/moveyourway/](http://health.gov/moveyourway/).

#### Light intensity

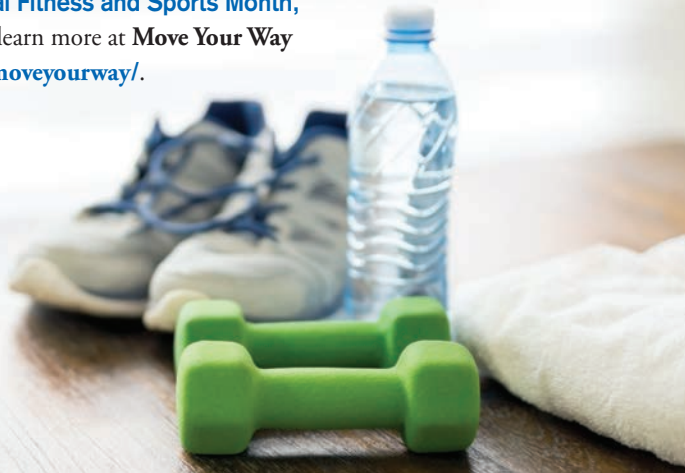
Walking leisurely or doing light household chores.

#### Moderate intensity

Biking, walking briskly or raking the yard.

#### Vigorous intensity

Jogging, circuit workouts or heavy labor.



### BEST bits

#### Stroke death rates in the U.S. have increased slightly after



**decades of decline.** And Americans are suffering strokes at younger ages, possibly due to higher rates of obesity and diabetes. Most strokes are preventable by controlling blood pressure and cholesterol with medication, not smoking or abusing alcohol, eating plenty of fruit and vegetables, losing excess weight and exercising. Learn more during **Stroke Awareness Month** in May: [stroke.org/stroke-resources](http://stroke.org/stroke-resources).



#### Bone loss, or osteoporosis, can lead to broken bones after age 50.

During **Osteoporosis Month**, bone up on how to stay fracture free. Get enough vitamin D and calcium (ask your health care provider). Don't smoke or abuse alcohol. Do regular weight-bearing exercise (e.g., walking) and strength training. And maintain a healthy weight — neither over nor under. Learn more at [nof.org/preventing-fractures/](http://nof.org/preventing-fractures/).

**If you are gaining weight despite eating fewer calories and exercising regularly,** these factors may be the cause: fluid accumulation in feet, hands, face or belly; fatigue or muscle weakness, possibly related to diabetes or low thyroid function; quitting smoking; increased stress; depression; or new medications. Discuss with your health care provider.

Aerodynamically the bumblebee shouldn't be able to fly, but the bumblebee doesn't know that so it goes on flying anyway.

— Mary Kay

## TIP of the MONTH



### DASH

#### May is High Blood Pressure Education Month, a good

time to try the eating plan best known to help prevent and treat high blood pressure:

#### Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH). It's

loaded with vegetables, fruit, fish, beans, low-fat dairy products and whole grains, but is low in meat, sweets and sodium. Studies show that people who follow this eating plan can lower blood pressure just as effectively as if they were taking medicine. **Note:** Even if you feel fine, never stop taking blood pressure medication.



Always ask, 'Why?' The more reasons you have to pursue a goal, the better you'll likely do in terms of achieving it.

— Michael S. Dobson

## eating smart

# Fish Power

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

**Dietary Guidelines suggest that Americans eat at least two (3.5 oz.) servings of fish each week,** and for good reason. Fish is a great source of protein and omega-3 fats, and contributes vitamins and minerals to the diet, including selenium, vitamin D, iron and zinc.

**Eating enough fish helps protect heart health,** lower blood pressure and improve blood vessel function, especially when you choose fatty fish such as salmon, trout and sardines. Fish may also help reduce the risk of depression and Alzheimer's disease. The trouble is, most Americans aren't eating enough fish. About half of all Americans eat fish only occasionally or not at all.

### Why is our fish intake so low?

Some people simply don't like fish, while others don't know how to prepare it. And others are worried

about possible contaminants such as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

**Is this fear warranted?** Researchers have calculated that if 100,000 people ate farmed salmon twice a week for 70 years, the extra PCB intake could potentially cause 24 extra deaths from cancer — but would prevent at least 7,000 deaths from heart disease. Levels of PCBs and dioxins in fish are very low, similar to levels in meats, dairy products and eggs.

**To avoid excess mercury,** especially if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or feeding young children, watch local fish advisories. Steer clear of shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish. Instead, choose shrimp, canned light tuna or salmon — which happen to be the most popular types of fish for eating in the U.S. anyway.



## Trout with Thai Peanut Slaw

2 large trout fillets (about 1½-2 lbs total)	1 red pepper, seeded and diced	¼ cup unseasoned rice vinegar or lime juice
Few pinches of salt and pepper	1 yellow pepper, seeded and diced	2½ tbsp chopped fresh chives
2 cups shredded purple cabbage	¼ cup natural peanut butter	
2 carrots, grated	1 tbsp sodium-reduced soy sauce	

### EASY recipe

**Preheat** oven to 400°F. **Line** a baking sheet with parchment. **Place** fish on parchment (skin side down) and sprinkle with salt and pepper. **Bake** 6-12 minutes or until fish flakes easily with fork (about 5 minutes per half-inch of thickness). **Meanwhile,** in a large bowl, combine cabbage, carrots and peppers. **In** a small bowl, whisk together peanut butter, soy sauce and vinegar or lime juice. **Pour** dressing over the vegetables and toss to coat. **Serve** slaw alongside trout and top with chives.

#### Makes 4 servings. Per serving:

275 calories | 26g protein | 13g total fat | 3g saturated fat | 6g mono fat  
4g poly fat | 15g carbohydrate | 5g sugar | 4g fiber | 372mg sodium

# What's On Your Mind?

**Do you ever feel like your mind is going in a million directions at once?** Or maybe that it's about to burst from all of life's demands? Information overload can lead to stress, negativity and disorganization. What's the solution?

**It pays to pursue a balanced state of engagement or flow**, which is not only enjoyable but far more productive. Try these steps to declutter your mind:

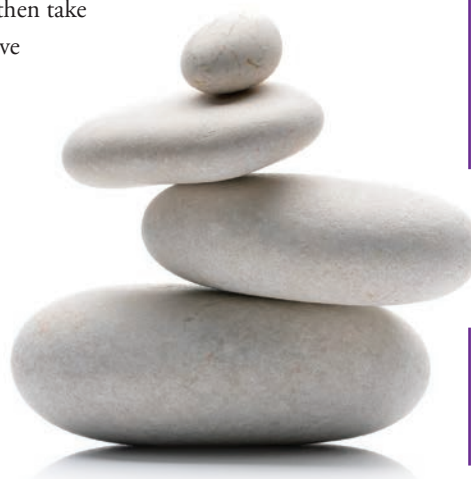
**Challenge yourself, but not too much.** When a task is too easy, you are likely to get bored; when it's too hard, you may become frustrated and discouraged. Seek the Goldilocks zone of just-right difficulty.

**Tame your emotional tiger.** Recognize and label your feelings; then take steps to manage them. Try deep breathing, challenging your negative thoughts and problem solving (vs. just plain worrying).

**Stay focused.** You may not experience the zone (the ability to focus) until 20 minutes into a task, so set distractions aside and stick with the activity long enough to hit your stride.

**Break it up.** Every hour or so, take a few minutes to stretch, move or do something different. You'll be fresher and more alert when you return.

**Review these steps as needed when you take on a new project.**



## Traveling abroad?

Stay healthy, and plan ahead. Before an international trip, check [cdc.gov/travel](https://www.cdc.gov/travel) for information about recommended vaccinations. Make sure you're up to date on routine vaccines, too, including the flu shot. Plan for enough needed medications; keep them in your carry-on bag. Learn more at [tsa.gov](https://www.tsa.gov) about traveling with medications and medical devices.



# Computer Vision Syndrome

**May is Healthy Vision Month** — a perfect time to focus on **computer vision syndrome (CVS)**. Although not a vision-threatening problem, CVS can cause several symptoms, including eyestrain, blurred vision, dry eyes, headaches and neck pain.

**Studies show 50% to 90% of people who use a computer** for 2 hours or more sometimes experience CVS symptoms.

**But there's good news.** Several simple self-help measures can help relieve and prevent CVS.

**For example, the American Optometric Association** advises adjusting your computer screen so it is about 4 to 5 inches below eye level. Position your computer screen to avoid glare, too. If you can't change the lighting, consider a glare filter for the computer screen.

## More eye-relieving tips:


- **REST** your eyes for 15 minutes after 2 hours of computer use.
- **FOLLOW** the **20-20-20 Rule**: For every 20 minutes of computer viewing, take a 20-second break and refocus your eyes by looking 20 feet away.
- **BLINK** frequently to keep eyes moist; use moisturizing eye drops.
- **MAKE** sure your chair is comfortable to avoid neck and shoulder discomfort.
- **GET** an eye exam. Uncorrected or under-corrected vision problems contribute to eyestrain. Some people benefit from glasses prescribed specifically for computer use, too.



# Take the Pressure Off



May is Stroke  
Prevention Month.

 **For flexibility**, the American College of Sports Medicine recommends **static stretching**. Slowly move a muscle to the end of its range of motion. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds, and repeat 2 to 4 times. Warming muscles first with light activity or a hot bath will make stretching easier.



**High blood pressure silently damages blood vessels and leads to serious health problems, including stroke.** In fact, it's the major risk factor for stroke. Reducing high blood pressure can help prevent stroke, a major cause of death and disability.

**First, discuss your blood pressure with your health care provider.** If it's too high, or borderline high, work with your health care provider to lower it.

**Taking prescribed medication, if needed, is important.** But there's much you can do to help:

- ✓ **Research has shown** the heart-healthy DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan, rich in vegetables, fruits and whole grains and low in salt, can lower high blood pressure.
- ✓ **Regular physical activity** can lower blood pressure. (Get your provider's okay if you are new to exercise.)
- ✓ **Control stress.** Research shows techniques such as yoga and meditation can effectively soothe stress, lowering blood pressure in many people.
- ✓ **Get serious about weight control.** Even losing just 3% to 5% of excess weight can improve blood pressure readings.
- ✓ **If you smoke, get help quitting.** Call the National Cancer Institute's free Smoking Quitline at **1-877-448-7848**.

Over the past two decades, extensive research all over the world has shown that laughter has a positive impact on various systems of the body. Most noteworthy is laughter's ability to unwind the negative effects of stress, the catalyst for many of our health problems.

— Madan Kataria

## EXPERT advice

### Q: Tips for adjusting to a newborn?

**A: Baby's homecoming can be joyful, but challenging.** To ease the transition:

- Before baby arrives (and exhaustion sets in), plan how you will address visit requests, baby's crying, night feedings, etc.
- Don't start new projects or worry about spotless housekeeping.
- Eat well, stay hydrated and sleep when the baby sleeps.
- If possible, take parental leave for childcare and bonding.
- Leave plenty of time open for nursing, naps and diaper changes.
- Accept help from medical professionals, new parents' support groups, friends and family. Consider delivered meals or night nurses.
- Be patient with the rollercoaster of emotions.
- Schedule date nights with your partner and chats with friends.
- Try to maintain perspective, humor and flexibility — in other words, enjoy the ride.

— Eric Endlich, PhD



# Learn about Lyme Disease

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

**Lyme disease is a bacterial infection carried by the deer tick *Ixodes*, and it's on the rise.** In the past 20 years Lyme disease has tripled in the U.S.; it's expected to continue increasing along with other tick-borne illnesses as the country warms.

## Ticks thrive in warm temperatures.

Deer ticks that carry Lyme disease are most active in brushy, wooded and grassy areas in summer. But they can remain active in areas with warm springs and summers or emerge early after a mild winter. Lyme disease is transmitted when the tick bites and stays in place for 24 to 48 hours. Using an insect repellent with DEET and wearing pants and long-sleeved shirts can help repel ticks. **Note:** Clothes pretreated with repellent are another option. Protection lasts through 70 washings.



**How to safely remove a tick:** Inspect your skin for ticks after outdoor activities in tick-infested areas. If you see a tick, quickly remove it. Grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible using fine-tipped tweezers. Remove the entire tick by pulling up with steady, even pressure. Disinfect the bite and your hands.

**Get treatment right away for suspected Lyme disease.** After a deer tick bite, your health care provider may recommend initial treatment with an antibiotic. Blood tests do not show positive results for 2 to 5 weeks. Untreated Lyme disease can cause a rash, muscle aches, fever and swollen glands. In later stages it can damage the heart, joints and nervous system.

## EXPERT advice

### Q: Asthma relief?

**A: In asthma, narrowed airways cause coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing.** Asthma relief can come from preventive steps and a treatment plan matched to disease severity. Top priorities:

**Prevention:** Schedule regular visits with your provider and get recommended care. Learn to identify your triggers and how to avoid them. Track your symptoms or peak flow meter readings to monitor how you're doing. Create an asthma action plan that tells you when to increase or decrease medicine based on your symptoms.

**Treatment:** Depending on disease severity, drugs for long-term control may be recommended, such as inhaled corticosteroids or long-acting inhaled beta agonists. Short-acting beta agonists often bring quick relief for asthma attacks. Severe asthma symptoms may require treatment with oral or intravenous corticosteroids.

**Seek medical care immediately** if you have rapid worsening of breathing, symptoms with minimal exertion, or no improvement after using a quick-relief inhaler.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP



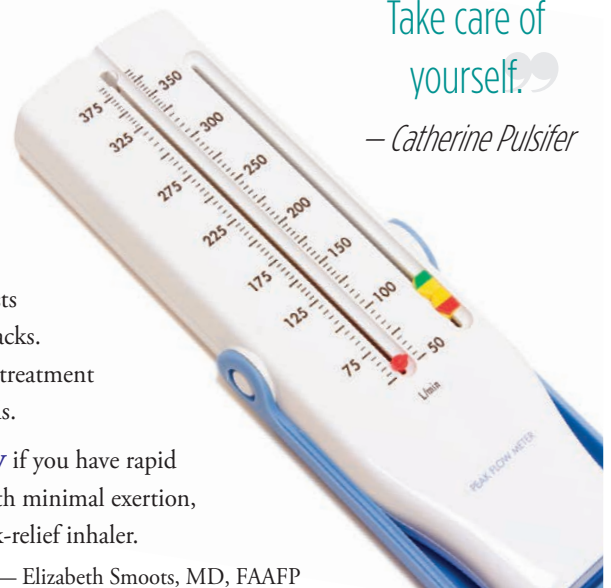
**Sunscreen reminder:** Sunny spring days bring more outdoor activities. But don't forget daily sunscreen —

especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. That's when the sun's rays are most intense, according to the National Institutes of Health. Select a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 30 or higher to prevent sunburn, premature skin aging and help reduce your risk of developing skin cancer, too. **And remember:** A tan isn't healthy — it's a sign of skin damage.

“Our health is something we often take for granted. But, there are some things in life that should never be taken for granted.

Take care of yourself.”

— Catherine Pulsifer



## Big BUDGET BUSTERS and How to Fix Them

By Jamie Lynn Byram, MBA, AFC, MS

Do you feel like you have tightened your budget as much as possible but



you still need money? Your budget may have money leaks that you've never thought about. Review this list to see if you are wasting money unintentionally.

**Streaming apps:** Do you subscribe to multiple streaming apps to cut cable costs? Are you paying for multiple services that offer the same shows? Look at all of your streaming subscriptions. Can you cancel 1 or more of them?

**Emergencies:** No one intentionally plans for something bad to happen. But things inevitably go wrong. Hence the need for an emergency fund. Stash 3 to 6 months of necessary living expenses in a separate account. When life strikes, you have money to handle the costs instead of wrecking your budget with unexpected expenses.

**Utilities:** Are rarely used appliances or gadgets plugged in? Do you leave lights on in rooms you aren't using? Do you leave the television on for background noise? All of these use electricity that you pay for each month. Develop ways to cut down on use and see your power bill decrease.

## Safe Jobs for Youth Month:



# 5 Ways to Stay Safe this Summer

School is almost out and with that, thousands of teen workers will start looking for summer jobs. According to UC Berkeley, every 6 minutes a U.S. teenage worker is injured enough to go to an ER and 30 to 50 die each year because of workplace incidents.

Prevent injuries and fatalities by following these 5 guidelines:

- 1 **Know the employment laws** in your state.
- 2 **Wear any safety gear required by your employer** and follow all the rules.
- 3 **Report unsafe conditions to your supervisor.** If nothing is done about the unsafe conditions, tell your parents. To file a confidential complaint, visit [osha.gov/workers/file\\_complaint.html](https://www.osha.gov/workers/file_complaint.html).
- 4 **Ask for help** when needed and don't be afraid to ask questions.
- 5 **For more details and information about your rights,** specific job hazards and safety requirements, visit [osha.gov/youngworkers/resources.html](https://www.osha.gov/youngworkers/resources.html).



## SAFETY corner

### MOLD-FREE Home

Preventing mold in your home can help avert significant health issues, not to mention keeping your home in tiptop shape. Use these tips to maintain a dry, fungus-free abode:

- ✓ **Install** a whole-house dehumidifier or use a portable dehumidifier in damp areas of your home, such as laundry rooms or basements.
- ✓ **Use** a drain pan under your water heater and washing machine. Wash pans with bleach before reinstalling them.
- ✓ **Position** downspouts away from the house.
- ✓ **Keep** your home well ventilated. Install and use exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens (make sure they vent to the outside).
- ✓ **Fix** plumbing leaks immediately.
- ✓ **Clean** fabrics in your home routinely and keep them dry.



May is Building Safety Month.

# Women: Take Time for Health

By Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus

**What have you done lately for better health?** Aside from taking care of work, household routines and the many people in your life, are you also taking care of your personal health needs? Like many women, maybe you feel you can't start a new health regimen because you lack time and energy. If so, keep in mind you'll find more time and energy by taking better care of yourself.

Following are several quick, simple ways to address key health targets — weight loss, nutritious eating, exercise and happiness.

## FOOD

- **Fill half of every meal** with fruits and vegetables.
- **Eat healthy** 90% of the time. Enjoy your favorite treats occasionally.
- **Learn how to cook a few easy meals.** Cut back on ordering unhealthy takeout food.
- **Limit alcohol** to 1 drink a day or less.
- **Drink water before snacking.** Sometimes what we think is hunger is actually thirst.
- **Choose a Mediterranean-style diet** to reduce your weight and stroke risk.

## MOVE

- **Stand up** and do 5-minute workouts using resistance bands.
- **Stand up** and do 5-minute core exercises.
- **Build leg muscle** and balance: Stand up on 1 leg and hold your pose for 30 to 60 seconds; repeat with the other leg (this takes some practice).
- **Be physically active at least 30 to 60 minutes each day.** Every movement on your feet counts: for example, walking up and down stairs and pacing while talking on the phone.

## MOOD

- **Get 7 to 9 hours of sleep** every day for sustained energy. For insomnia, adopt regular sleep habits.
- **Take 3-minute stress breaks.** Relax, close your eyes and breathe deeply.
- **Turn off the chatter** and texting and listen to music.
- **Challenge your brain daily.** Read or use smartphone apps to learn about your special interests.
- **When feeling low,** reach out to a friend. But don't be dependent on outside factors to be happy.
- **Recognize and be proud** of your strengths.
- **Stop getting in the way of your good mood.** Remember to feel the positive aspects of your day and your life — and let that motivate you to better health.
- **Find laughter** and feel grateful every day.

**Identify your favorite health priorities,** such as eating better or reducing stress in your life. Then identify specific goals and how to realistically achieve them. For example, you might choose a daily 20-minute walk in exchange for less social networking. Or join a lively support group for help quitting smoking.



### Take preventive action against the top 2 causes of death in America — heart disease and cancer:

- 1 **Learn your family's medical history;** recognize the leading risks to good health including obesity, smoking and inactivity.
- 2 **Depending on your age,** be sure you have regular cancer screenings and routine checkups.
- 3 **Work closely with a trusted health care provider,** especially on tough issues (e.g., alcohol abuse, losing excess weight, or ongoing stress).

**Good health is a woman's best friend.** That relationship becomes stronger as you learn the importance of staying well with age. Whether you're 25 or 65, know the steps needed to ensure continued health — and don't delay. Learn more about aging well during **National Women's Health Week, May 12 to 18.** Go to [womenshealth.gov/nwhw/by-age](http://womenshealth.gov/nwhw/by-age).



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## DR. ZORBA'S corner

### Research shows that some smokers stop using cigarettes and start vaping.

But if you're considering vaping as a safe alternative to cigarettes, think again. The chemicals you inhale are not regulated by the FDA. They're also laced with nicotine, to hook you. And the Surgeon General recently announced that vaping is reaching epidemic levels among teens, and getting them addicted to nicotine, a habit than can be hard to break. If you — or your teen — needs help quitting, talk to your health care provider about proven, safe methods. — Zorba Paster, MD



## May Fill-in-the Blank Puzzle

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

- 1 Dietary Guidelines suggest that Americans eat at least \_\_\_\_\_ servings of fish weekly.
- 2 Americans are suffering \_\_\_\_\_ at younger ages, possibly due to higher rates of obesity and diabetes.
- 3 Vitamin \_\_\_\_\_ is important for bone health.
- 4 DASH stands for \_\_\_\_\_ . (5 words)
- 5 Following the \_\_\_\_\_ rule can help you reduce the risk of computer vision syndrome.
- 6 Lyme disease is a \_\_\_\_\_ infection.
- 7 Select a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of \_\_\_\_\_ or higher to prevent sunburn, premature skin aging and help reduce your risk of developing skin cancer, too.
- 8 National \_\_\_\_\_ Health Week is May 12 to 18.

### Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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