

SMART Health

SEPTEMBER 2019

September is Cholesterol Education Month.



Better HDL, Better HEALTH

Your blood cholesterol levels are key to a strong heart and basic good health. Cholesterol is essential to our bodies on a cellular level. This waxy fat-like substance is in every cell attached to proteins called lipoproteins. We have 2 major types of cholesterol:

The bad: Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol collects on the walls of your blood vessels, causing clotting that can lead to stroke or heart attack.

The good: High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol helps remove some of the bad cholesterol in your blood, returning it to your liver where it's broken down and passed from your body.

Control with medication? If your LDL level runs high, your health care provider may prescribe lowering it with medication. Reducing LDL and triglyceride levels can sometimes also improve HDL. But drugs designed specifically to raise HDL have generally not reduced heart attack risk.

Lifestyle factors? Unhealthy, low HDL levels often occur in people who smoke or have obesity, high blood pressure or high blood sugar levels — conditions that can be controlled with better health habits. Simple daily choices can lead to healthier levels of both HDL and LDL.

Talk to your provider about your cholesterol numbers and everyday ways to improve them.



Primary goals:

- ❖ **Lose excess weight** with regular exercise and a heart-healthy diet.
- ❖ **Stop smoking.** This can improve HDL and help your heart significantly.
- ❖ **Replace fast food and processed foods** with home cooking and lots of vegetables.
- ❖ **Skip sugar-rich foods** and those containing trans fats.

Do it for your heart and your long-term health.

BEST bits

■ **Are you or your kids bothered by backpack strain?** Over time, overloaded backpacks can cause some hefty health problems, including back, shoulder and neck strain, and may lead to falls. **School Backpack Awareness Day is September 18**, sponsored by the American Occupational Therapy Association. Learn more at aota.org.



■ **September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month.** The rate of this disease in the U.S. has been slowly declining. It ranks fifth in cancer deaths among women; about half are diagnosed with it after age 62. This year, nearly 14,000 women will die from ovarian cancer. Learn more at ovarian.org/index.php.



■ **September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month**, a good time to review the risk factors for prostate cancer. If your brother or father had it, your risk of developing it more than doubles. A diet high in fatty red meat or high-fat dairy may slightly increase the risk. Most prostate cancers in the U.S. are diagnosed in men after age 64. By age 50 you should discuss prostate screening with your health care provider if you are at average risk, or earlier if you're at high risk. When diagnosed early, the 5-year survival rate is nearly 100%.

TIP of the MONTH

WHOLE Nutrition

September is Whole Grains Month,



so celebrate with amaranth, brown rice, oats, millet or quinoa. Whole grains are more nutritious than their refined counterparts (white rice and white flour products), because the whole versions contain more fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. So swap brown rice for white, and choose whole-grain breads and pasta for a nutritious change. Look for foods that list **whole grain** first in the ingredients or are labeled **100% whole grain**.



“For happy health,
fuel yourself
with dreams
and greens.”

— Terri Guillemets

eating smart



HEALTH at the End of the RAINBOW

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



September is Fruits and Veggies — More Matters Month.

Filling half of your plate with vegetables and fruit at every meal is a great way to ensure you get enough of these wholesome foods each day. But which vegetables and fruits are the healthiest? They are all good.

Your best bet is to choose a variety of options from all colors of the rainbow. Each hue comes with a unique set of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytonutrients (health-friendly plant compounds), so variety is important. The vibrant colors in vegetables and fruits are more than just pretty — they are functional, too. The pigments that make carrots orange, tomatoes red and spinach green work collectively to help protect whole body health.

The exact type and amount we need of each vegetable and fruit is not fully understood, so the best advice is to capture the rainbow during your daily meals and snacks. Include these beauties for:

Lycopene: In tomatoes, watermelon and pink grapefruit. It's linked to a reduced risk of certain cancers, especially breast and prostate.

Anthocyanins: In blueberries, blackberries and purple cabbage. They're linked to heart health, brain health and better cognitive function.

Carotenoids: In carrots, leafy greens, sweet potatoes and pumpkins. Carotenoids may help prevent cataracts and other age-related eye diseases.

Flavonoids: In cherries, berries and red grapes. These pigments have shown anti-inflammatory effects, and may also protect heart and brain health.

Sulforaphane: In broccoli, cauliflower, kale and cabbage. This plant compound has been shown to reduce cancer cell growth in lab and animal studies.

Remember, there isn't 1 superfood in the produce section that will fully protect your health on its own, but a variety of colorful vegetables and fruit are part of a balanced diet that has proven health benefits.

Quinoa Tabbouleh

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 cup quinoa, rinsed | 2 green onions, white parts only, chopped |
| 3 medium tomatoes, diced | ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil |
| 1 English cucumber, diced | ¼ cup fresh lemon juice |
| 2 medium carrots, peeled and grated | 1 clove garlic, finely minced |
| 1 cup fresh chopped parsley | ½ tsp salt |
| ½ cup fresh chopped mint | Pinch pepper |

In a medium pot, combine quinoa with 2 cups water. **Bring** to a boil. **Reduce** heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until water is absorbed. **Fluff** with a fork and set aside. **In** a large bowl, combine tomatoes, cucumber, carrots, parsley, mint and onions. **Add** quinoa to vegetables and mix well. **In** a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt and pepper. **Pour** dressing over quinoa and toss to combine. **Serve** with lemon wedges.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving:

227 calories | 6g protein | 11g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 7g mono fat | 3g poly fat | 28g carbohydrate | 3g sugar | 4g fiber | 220mg sodium

EASY recipe





Better Writing Basics

Typed words are a primary way we communicate. Email, text messaging, blogging and social media posts show much about who we are and our opinions. In many ways, writing is key to strong personal and professional relationships.

The best reason for writing well at work is to inform clearly without confusion, and to avoid errors and wasted time. Obviously, you need a formal approach when writing to clients, colleagues and coworkers.

Use basic steps to compose your writing. Start with a primary idea and organize your facts. Choose the proper tone and use common words to form cohesive sentences. **Some guidelines:**

Keep sentences and paragraphs brief. They are easier to read and raise comprehension.

Be formal. Write complete sentences with proper grammar. Be polite and show gratitude when appropriate. Refer to people by name.

Be clear and direct. With each sentence, use the simplest words possible to deliver your message. Nobody wants to read something, then stop and figure out what the messenger is trying to say.

Segment multiple topics. Highlight each point using numbers.

Use a positive tone. Avoid negative statements that are overly demanding or convey irritation, such as *“No surprise, we missed another deadline.”*

Reread your message. Look for possible misunderstandings and grammatical blunders, especially on important documents.

Review and edit. Given time, consider how a different word or sentence might improve your message.

Communicate your best. Remember, your writing is a reflection of you, your values and professionalism.

“Health is the thing that makes you feel that now is the best time of year.”

— Franklin P. Adams

Need encouragement to exercise more? You aren't alone. The CDC says more than 60% of American women aren't getting enough physical activity and 25% don't exercise at all.



Women's Health & Fitness Day on

September 25 can help kick-start a new or low-key fitness plan. On this day, join 50,000 other American women and get moving during health and fitness events offered by hundreds of parks, recreation centers, health clubs and community organizations.



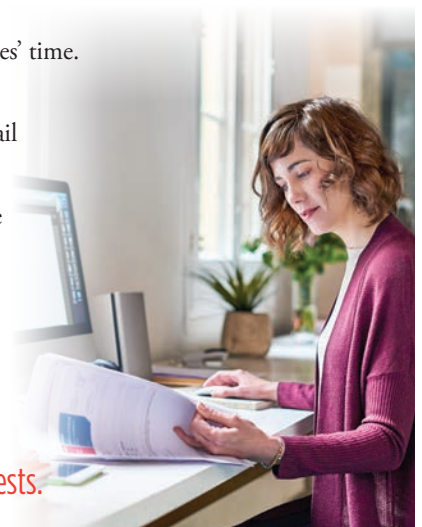
Stay Connected When You Work from Home

Telecommuting has advantages, including no commute time. But it also has a downside. You can feel isolated from your coworkers and people, in general. And, according to the American Psychological Association, social isolation does more than cause loneliness — it raises the risk of health problems, too.

Telecommuting is not going away. In fact, regularly working from home, full- or part-time, for the non-self-employed has soared more than 100% during the past decade.


If you work from home now or in the future, use these 5 tips to stay connected:

- ❖ **Check in with your coworkers daily.** Share brief chats and texts, being mindful of colleagues' time.
- ❖ **Teleconference.** Talking virtually in real time when discussing a project can be more productive than email — and help you feel part of a team, too.
- ❖ **Take breaks outside.** Go for a walk, speak to people and enjoy your flexibility.
- ❖ **Schedule face-to-face time during the week.** Meet both non-work friends and colleagues for occasional lunch or coffee. If you work in the same city as your home office, visit in person occasionally and attend company events when possible.
- ❖ **Join a group that shares your profession or interests.** Attend meetings, activities and network.



“Don't forget to tell yourself positive things daily. You must love yourself internally to glow externally.”

— Hannah Bronfman

 **About 140,000 Americans die of stroke each year**, according to the CDC. Recognizing these **5 stroke signs** and getting immediate help improves the odds of surviving a stroke and avoiding stroke-caused disability, too.

1. Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arms or legs.
2. Sudden confusion or difficulty speaking.
3. Sudden vision changes.
4. Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of coordination.
5. Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

“The ability to be in the present moment is a major component of mental wellness.”

— Abraham Maslow

Snoring is Serious Business

Snoring occurs when relaxed tissues in your throat vibrate as you breathe during sleep. It can annoy and keep your partner awake, but snoring can also disrupt your own sleep, causing fatigue and raising the risk of health problems.

Nasal polyps, enlarged tonsils and a stuffy nose can cause snoring. Drinking alcohol before bed and simply growing older, too, can cause tongue and throat muscles to relax, resulting in snoring. But **sleep apnea**, marked by breathing that stops briefly and repeatedly during sleep, is the most serious condition linked to snoring.

Sleep apnea causes choking noises and snoring during sleep because your airway is narrowed, often from excess weight. Your brain perceives breathing difficulty and wakes you up, often many times an hour. You may not remember the repeated awakenings, but the result can be morning headaches, irritability, forgetfulness, behavior or mood changes, anxiety and depression.

If you experience sleep apnea symptoms, talk to your health care provider about sleep study testing. Treatment for sleep apnea typically includes lifestyle changes, weight loss and a continuous positive air pressure (CPAP) machine. Untreated, sleep apnea raises the risk of stroke, heart failure, irregular heartbeats, heart attack and hypertension, according to the National Institutes of Health.



EXPERT advice

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Q: Nail biting cure?



A: Many children and adults bite their nails without even thinking. It may happen more often when they're feeling stressed, anxious, depressed, insecure, bored or hungry. But the habit has some downsides. Putting fingers in the mouth increases the risk for colds, flu, skin infections, abnormal nails and chipped teeth. Fortunately, there are several ways you can stop unwanted nail biting.

Physical steps. Keep your nails cut short. Coat them with a bitter-flavored nail polish. Wear gloves or cover your nails with stickers made to prevent nail biting.

Mental methods. Get manicures to improve nail appearance and provide a reason to keep them up. Find another activity to do with your hands or mouth such as a worry stone, favorite craft or chewing gum. Discover healthier ways to deal with stress and other nail-biting triggers.

Menopause Relief

Although menopause is a normal part of aging in women, hormonal changes can cause annoying and sometimes embarrassing physical changes, such as the sudden perspiration-producing sensations called hot flashes.

But there are ways to reduce or possibly eliminate menopause symptoms with lifestyle changes, according to the National Institutes of Health:

- ◆ Dress in layers and remove some clothing when you feel a hot flash starting.
- ◆ Sipping a cold drink and taking slow, deep breaths can reduce the feeling of heat.
- ◆ Avoiding smoking, spicy food, excess caffeine and alcohol can often keep hot flashes at bay.
- ◆ Hot flashes disrupt sleep so keep your bedroom cool (a fan nearby can help) and sleep in lightweight clothing.
- ◆ Regular exercise can pay off with better sleep quality and help keep weight under control (being overweight is associated with more severe hot flashes).
- ◆ If menopause causes vaginal dryness, over-the-counter water-based lubricants and vaginal moisturizers, used regularly, offer relief.

When lifestyle changes aren't providing enough help, talk to your health care provider about other treatments, including prescription medications and low-dose hormones, that may be appropriate for you, depending on your medical history and symptoms.

EXPERT advice

Q: Does exercise relieve depression?

A: For mild to moderate depression, exercise is sometimes as effective as antidepressant medication — without the side effects.

Exercise promotes improvement through brain changes: neural growth, reduced inflammation and feel-good chemicals (endorphins). It can also help by distracting you from negative thoughts, promoting social connections (through exercise classes or clubs) and fostering self-esteem.

To reap these benefits, try 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise (e.g., brisk walking): one 30-minute, two 15-minute or three 10-minute sessions, 5 days a week. Of course, any physical activity is better than none. After being cleared for exercise by your health care provider, start with several minutes of activity and increase your time each day. Choose an activity you enjoy, reward yourself to stay motivated and add variety to prevent boredom. Stick with it and you may soon feel better in mind and body.



September is
Menopause Awareness Month.



“Stay positive and happy. Work hard and don't give up hope. Be open to criticism and keep learning. Surround yourself with happy, warm and genuine people.”

— Tena Desae

♥ **Colorectal cancer is the second deadliest cancer in the U.S.**, largely because many adults skip colonoscopies. New University of Pennsylvania research shows a painless mail-in fecal immunochemical test (FIT) with no diet restrictions is a colonoscopy alternative more people are likely to use. If blood is detected, a follow-up colonoscopy can check for pre-cancerous polyps and cancer at the earliest, curable stage.

150
minutes
per week

— Eric Endlich, PhD

WINTERIZE and Save

Before winter comes, take these money-saving steps:

- 1. Inspect your water heater:** Regular maintenance keeps your water heater performing optimally.
- 2. Change filters:** As filters get clogged, these systems work harder to heat and cool. Replace dusty filters to reduce heating and cooling expenses.
- 3. Adjust ceiling fans:** Downward-facing blades push warm air from the ceiling back down so the room becomes warm evenly and quickly. Using your fan in the winter shortens the time a room takes to heat, which makes your utility bill easier on your wallet.

Get Ready for
WINTER



A Clean Kitchen = A Safe Kitchen



Everyone likes a clean kitchen, but beyond the aesthetic motivation, cleanliness equals health. Here are some tips to keep your kitchen not only sparkling, but reduce your risk of food poisoning.

Wipe up spills and crumbs immediately after food preparation; bacteria can grow quickly.

Wash vegetables before preparation, but do not wash eggs, meat or poultry (see “**To Wash or Not to Wash?**” below).

Use separate utensils and cutting boards for meat and vegetables to avoid cross contamination. Always wash your hands with warm soapy water after handling raw meat.

Store meat — even when defrosting — in a shallow container on the bottom rack of the refrigerator to prevent meat drippings from contaminating other foods.

Set a calendar reminder to clean the refrigerator once a week.* Wipe up spills, check for spoilage and wipe handles weekly. **Monthly:** Check expiration dates; empty drawers and shelves and then wash.

Clean your dishwasher drain and remove food deposits monthly. Run a vinegar wash cycle and then a baking soda wash cycle.

Scrub your sink with soap and warm water, and disinfect with diluted bleach at least once a week to remove bacteria. Remember the faucet, too.



Replace the sponge. Kitchen sponges harbor large amounts of bacteria, as much as a toilet. Use a dishcloth instead and wash it after a few uses. **Tip:** If you do use a sponge, replace it every week. Wash it and microwave it wet for 1 to 2 minutes or boil it for 5 minutes daily.

***Don't forget the office refrigerator.** Create a cleaning schedule with coworkers who use the fridge.



To Wash or Not to Wash?

Washing raw poultry may seem like a good idea, but according to food safety experts, it isn't. Washing poultry will spread the bacteria around, causing cross-contamination. It also doesn't eliminate all of the bacteria on the poultry. **Best bet:** Leave it alone, and wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap after handling raw poultry.



What Causes HEADACHES?

Knowing can help prevent them.

Headache is common to most of us. It's usually a minor nuisance we can relieve with some food, coffee or rest. For severe headache, you might worry about stroke, blood clots or a tumor but a connection to such conditions is rare.



Still, headaches are not well understood because of the complexity and sensitivity of the head; and each individual's pain is unique.

Why does your head ache? The pain is signaled by the blood vessels in your head and neck, the surrounding brain tissues and nerves. Your scalp, sinuses, teeth and neck muscles can often cause head pain.

Primary types of headache:

Tension: This is by far the most common headache; it causes a dull, squeezing pain on both sides of the head. While usually short-term and moderate, the pain can be severe and frequent in some people.

Common triggers: fatigue, stress or trouble with the muscles or joints of the neck and jaw.

Migraine: Neurologists believe these severe headaches are caused by changes in the brain's blood flow and nerve cell activity. Symptoms include pulsating, intense pain, sometimes with nausea, vomiting and vision effects. **Possible triggers:** certain smells or smoke, bright light, alcohol, medications, various foods and fatigue.

Cluster: These uncommon but severe headaches occur more often in people with a history of smoking. They tend to come in clusters — several per day for 1 to 3 months — and may cause agitation, nausea and sensitivity to light.

Sinus: An acute sinusitis infection can cause pain around the forehead, nose, eyes and cheeks or upper teeth. When the infection heals, the pain stops. This is 1 of many conditions causing headache, including high blood pressure and medications.

Note: Migraine is sometimes misdiagnosed as sinus headache.

Rebound: This type can occur in people with a history of tension or migraine headaches if they use excess pain medicine (including acetaminophen, ibuprofen, sinus relief drugs, sleep sedatives and narcotic pain relievers). While small weekly amounts of these drugs may be safe and effective, at some point they may produce mild but long-term rebound pain.

QUIKRISK™ assessment

When Your Head Hurts

Check your symptoms. Your headaches could be serious if they:

- Are unusually painful.
- Increase with movement.
- Get steadily worse.
- Affect your mental ability.
- Occur after a head injury.
- Occur with fever.
- Prevent normal activities.
- First start after age 50.

If you checked any of these symptoms, consult your health care provider. Get prompt attention for headache with fainting, convulsions, stiff neck or slurred speech.

Head-Smart Habits for Frequent Headaches:

❶ **Avoid your triggers by learning what's causing them.** Track your symptoms, behavior and surroundings for a few weeks using our Headache Diary download at personalbest.com/extras/THWC/RightNavigation/PBest-Headache-Diary.pdf.

❷ **Get enough sleep.** Adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep nightly on a regular schedule.

❸ **Don't skip meals.** Avoid alcohol and limit caffeine — too much of either can produce headache.

❹ **Reduce stress.** It's a major trigger of chronic headaches. Simplify your schedule; try yoga, tai chi or meditation to help balance your days.

❺ **Exercise regularly.** It may reduce the frequency and severity of migraine and stress-related headaches.

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DR. ZORBA'S corner

The FDA is proposing changing the rules for mammograms — they want

physicians to tell women with dense breasts that their mammograms may not be accurate. Why? Because these women can have cancers that are obscured by the dense glands that form the breast. The FDA is right. Every woman who has a mammogram should know how accurate that test is. If they have dense breasts they should know that the test is not as accurate as it is in other women, and that some cancers can be missed. The goal is to get a clear, concise letter from the radiology department that summarizes the results and encourages women with dense breasts to discuss this with their health care provider. Better information means better outcomes. — Zorba Paster, MD

September Fill-in-the Blank Puzzle

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

- 1 Overloaded backpacks over time can cause back, neck and shoulder _____.
- 2 Enlarged _____ can cause snoring.
- 3 September is _____ Education Month.
- 4 _____ cancer ranks fifth in cancer deaths among women.
- 5 _____ are found in blackberries, blueberries and purple cabbage.
- 6 For mild to moderate _____, exercise is sometimes as effective as medication.
- 7 _____ symptoms include pulsating, intense pain, sometimes with nausea, vomiting and vision effects.
- 8 Kitchen _____ harbor large amounts of bacteria, as much as a toilet.

Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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