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Healthy Life® Letter

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Promoting Health. Enhancing Life. Reducing Costs.

On average, 20 steps will burn one calorie.

This does not mean you need to walk 20 steps for every calorie you eat. Your body will burn many just going through its normal functions. But by taking those extra steps and burning extra calories, you can help maintain a balance with the energy in foods you consume.



Happy faces.

Women are twice as likely as men to use emoticons in text messages, according to a study from Rice University. Emoticons are graphic symbols that use punctuation marks and letters to represent facial expressions to convey a person's mood. :-) Texting has become one of the most popular forms of communication in society worldwide. This year alone, it is estimated that 8 trillion text messages will be tapped out. :-[



13 reasons why walking works

1. Safest exercise on earth
2. Simple exercise for people who haven't been exercising
3. Families can walk together
4. Social interaction is possible (walk and talk)
5. Sparks creativity (take along a notebook and pen or a camera)
6. Improves endurance
7. Ideal for weight loss
8. Strengthens bones
9. Tones legs
10. Perfect for exploring
11. Reduces stress
12. Very inexpensive (no special equipment required, just shoes)
13. Can be done anytime, anywhere, and for life! Your life!

From Walk the Four Seasons by walking guru Robert Sweetgall, Creative Walking, Inc., www.creativewalking.com, who has walked across the USA 7 times.



Self-Care Corner

Sunscreen labels changed

You won't find sunblock this year. And you won't find waterproof on the sunscreen labels either. The FDA has created new labeling rules.

Look for broad spectrum to be protected against UVA and UVB sun rays. Buy SPF 30 or higher, advises the American Academy of Dermatology.

If the sunscreen is water resistant, you'll also see the designation 40 or 80 minutes, which is the amount of time it works before you need to reapply. No sunscreens were ever waterproof or sweat proof anyway. And not all new sunscreens are water resistant.

Don't buy sunscreens that contain insect repellent. The AAD says you should buy two different products. Apply the insect repellent only once. The sunscreen you'll need to apply more often.

Start your summer sun safety plan by tossing out all your outdated sunscreen lotions and tubes. The potency does expire. Start fresh this sun season. Read the labels.

Nail the infection

Despite the wealth of over-the-counter products available that claim to treat fungal nail infections (in the toenails and sometimes in the fingernails), the only way to cure an infection is to see a skin doctor (a dermatologist).

Over-the-counter topical medications don't penetrate the nail and therefore aren't as effective as oral prescriptions. A dermatologist can prescribe the proper drugs to get rid of the fungi that are the problem in yellowing and misshapen nails.

One of the best ways to deal with fungal nail infections is to prevent them from happening. The fungi love warm, damp environments around swimming pools and gym locker rooms—and inside your warm, sweaty socks.

The best way to nail a nail infection is to keep your feet clean and dry and wear sandals in public shower areas.



{Note:} Many topics like the one on this page are contained in a medical self-care guide, such as Healthier at Home®, Health at Home®, and HealthyLife® Self-Care Guide, and/or addressed by a nurse advice line. They serve as excellent resources. If you have a self-care guide and/or access to a nurse advice line, use it whenever you are unsure about what to do for symptoms and health issues you are experiencing. They can help you make better decisions about when to seek professional assistance and when you can treat yourself at home using self-care.}

Health Tips



State fair food. How unhealthy?

State fair food booths are famous for deep-frying most anything—even butter. It's not unusual for a single serving to hit 500 or even 1,000 calories, with dozens of grams of fat.

As unlikely as it may sound, it is possible to get a taste of a state fair without overindulging, says Dr. Donald Hensrud, a Mayo Clinic specialist in nutrition and preventive medicine.

- Give yourself a good start and eat something healthy before you go. Have some fruit to start the day or a salad before you go in the afternoon.
- Work off the extra calories through walking, which is easy to do at the fair.
- Burn off extra calories by getting in an extra workout or two, before or after the fair.
- Decide ahead of time how much and what you'll indulge in. If you have a plan, you're less likely to overeat. Turkey legs on the midway or dairy barn homemade ice cream? Pick one and plan ahead.
- Split portions with family or friends. This will not only help decrease calorie intake, but also lets you enjoy more tastes and may help to save money.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated and aid the digestive process. Stay away from non-diet soda. It's loaded with calories and sugar and has no nutritional benefit. Drink water instead.
- Don't panic if you overindulge. Return to your normal eating routine the next day.



Healthy Eating



Organic? Comparing apples to apples

Should you spend the extra cents to buy organic produce? Is organic a healthier choice? New findings from Stanford University cast some doubt on the benefits of buying organic.



“There isn’t much difference between organic and conventional foods, if you’re an adult and making a decision based solely on your health,” said Dr. Dena Bravata from Stanford’s Center for Health Policy. The study compares the nutrition of organic and non-organic foods and is published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

This is the broadest study to date comparing organic and conventional foods. The researchers did not find strong evidence that organic foods are more nutritious or carry fewer health risks than conventional options, though consumption of organic foods can reduce the risk of pesticide exposure.

The popularity of organic products, which are generally grown without synthetic pesticides or fertilizers or routine use of antibiotics or growth hormones, is skyrocketing in the United States. Organic foods are often twice as expensive as their conventionally grown counterparts.

Although there is a common perception—perhaps based on price alone—that organic foods are better for you than non-organic ones, it remains an open question as to the health benefits.

The researchers found no consistent differences in the vitamin content of organic products, and only one nutrient—phosphorus—was significantly higher in organic versus conventionally grown produce (and the researchers note that because few people have phosphorous deficiency, this has little clinical significance).

There was also no difference in protein or fat content between organic and conventional milk, though evidence from a limited number of studies suggested that organic milk may contain significantly higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids.

The review yielded scant evidence that conventional foods posed greater health risks than organic products. While researchers found that organic produce is 30 percent less likely to be contaminated with pesticides than conventional fruits and vegetables, organic foods are not necessarily 100 percent free of pesticides. What’s more, as the researchers noted, the pesticide levels of all foods fell within the allowable safety limits.

“If you look beyond health effects, there are plenty of other reasons to buy organic instead of conventional,” noted Dr. Bravata. She listed taste preferences and concerns about the effects of conventional farming practices on the environment and animal welfare as some of the reasons people choose organic products.

Wash that lettuce

While it is important to thoroughly wash most fresh fruits and vegetables, if packaged greens are labeled “ready-to-eat,” “washed,” or “triple washed,” then the product does NOT need to be washed at home.

Pre-washed greens have been through a cleaning process immediately before going into the bag. Re-washing and handling the greens creates opportunities for contamination.

Always handle pre-washed greens with clean hands and make sure cutting boards, utensils, and countertops are clean, according to the Partnership for Food Safety Education.



Featured Recipe:

Quinoa and Edamame Salad

Try a couple of new ingredients in this vegan recipe. Quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wa) is a whole grain that's really a seed prepared like rice. It's versatile. And edamame (ed-uh-MAH-may) is an immature soybean in the pod.

3 cups cooked quinoa (1 cup dry), quinoa can be cooked in a rice cooker just like rice
1 cup edamame from frozen (shelled), micro-cook on HIGH until tender
(asparagus pieces can also be used instead)
1/3 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup sunflower seeds or walnut pieces, roasted or toasted

For the garden vinaigrette:

1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot or 2 tablespoons chopped green onions
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon white pepper
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons fresh sage, chopped (1/2 tsp dried)
2 teaspoons fresh oregano, chopped (1/2 tsp dried)
2 teaspoons fresh thyme, chopped (1/2 tsp dried)

Directions:

Combine the first 4 ingredients in serving bowl and mix well. Add the first 6 vinaigrette ingredients to mini food processor and pulse to blend into an emulsion. Fold in the herbs and adjust salt and pepper to taste (if desired).

If you don't have a mini food processor (or similar), whisk the first 5 vinaigrette ingredients together in medium bowl. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil, whisking constantly to form an emulsion. Fold in herbs and adjust salt and pepper to taste (if desired). Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

Makes about 9 servings (1/2 cup each). Per serving: 190 calories, 5 g protein, 16 g carbohydrate, 10 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 3 g fiber, 110 mg sodium.

Used with permission from Elaine Magee, MPH, RD, The Recipe Doctor, www.recipe-doctor.com.



FREE recipes for people who have chronic illness. Based on the recommendations of the American Institute for Cancer Research, the website contains recipes that promote a diet full of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, chicken and fish to help patients get well—and stay well at www.CookForYourLife.org.

Medical News

5 things to know about lung cancer



Lung cancer is the country's leading cause of cancer death. Many of the 160,000 deaths from lung cancer in the U.S. can be prevented. Dr. Bruce Johnson, the director of the Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, sorts out the facts about lung cancer and offers simple ways to reduce risk.

1. Lung cancer targets more than just smokers.

The greatest risk factor for lung cancer is smoking, but nonsmokers can also develop lung cancer. About 10 to 15 percent of lung cancer cases occur in nonsmokers, many of them women.

2. Know the warning signs. They can be subtle but symptoms to be aware of include a cough that does not go away, shortness of breath, back and shoulder pain, and coughing up blood. This could be a sign of something serious and should be discussed with a doctor.

3. It's never too late to quit smoking. People who stop and remain a nonsmoker for at least 10 to 20 years can cut their risk of developing lung cancer by 50 to 75 percent.

4. CT screenings can save lives. Lung cancer can be difficult to detect and, until recently, there has not been a good screening test. But results from the National Lung Screening Trial suggest that screening high-risk people with low-dose CT scans can detect tumors at an earlier stage, resulting in improved lung cancer survival. Screening is currently recommended for people who are between the ages of 55 and 74 and who have smoked a pack a day for 30 years and quit fewer than 15 years ago.

5. New therapies show promise. Thanks to advances in the last decade, new targeted therapies offer more treatment options for patients.

Mow safely

Lawn mowers are powerful machines. Careless injuries harm children and adults alike each year, according to these concerned medical groups: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (the docs who reattach fingers!).

Prevent injuries by following these lawn mower safety tips:

- Only use a mower with a control that stops the mower blade from moving if the handle is let go.
- Children should be at least 12 years of age before operating a push lawn mower and age 16 to operate a driving lawn mower.
- Wear sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) while mowing.
- Prevent injuries from flying objects, such as stones or toys, by picking up objects from the lawn before mowing begins. Have anyone who uses a mower or is in the vicinity to wear polycarbonate protective eyewear at all times.
- Do not pull the mower backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse.
- Always turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before removing the grass catcher, unclogging the discharge chute, inspecting or repairing lawn mower equipment, or crossing gravel paths, roads, or other areas.
- Use a stick or broom handle (not your hands or feet) to remove debris in lawn mowers.
- Do not allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on mowers and keep children out of the yard while mowing.
- Drive up and down slopes, not across to prevent mower rollover.
- Keep lawn mowers in good working order. Before using a lawn mower for the first time in a season, have it serviced to ensure that it is working correctly.





Ragweed

Maybe you've never been allergic to ragweed. You may not be miserable at the end of summer during ragweed season like a lot of other people.

But even if you've never had a problem with seasonal hay fever caused by ragweed, don't assume that runny nose and itchy eyes are caused by a cold.

The truth, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, is that anyone can develop an allergy—including an allergy to ragweed—later in life.

Scientists think it may be you've always had the allergy, but it might have taken exposure to another allergen to trigger your symptoms. If symptoms won't go away, lasting more than 2 weeks, you probably have allergies.

Common allergy symptoms include itchy eyes and nose, as well as sneezing, but the mucus is typically clear.

You'll want to talk with your doctor first about over-the-counter medications to try to relieve those annoying symptoms.



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