

Monmouth County's

SUMMER ISSUE
JULY/AUGUST 2017

Ask The DOCTOR

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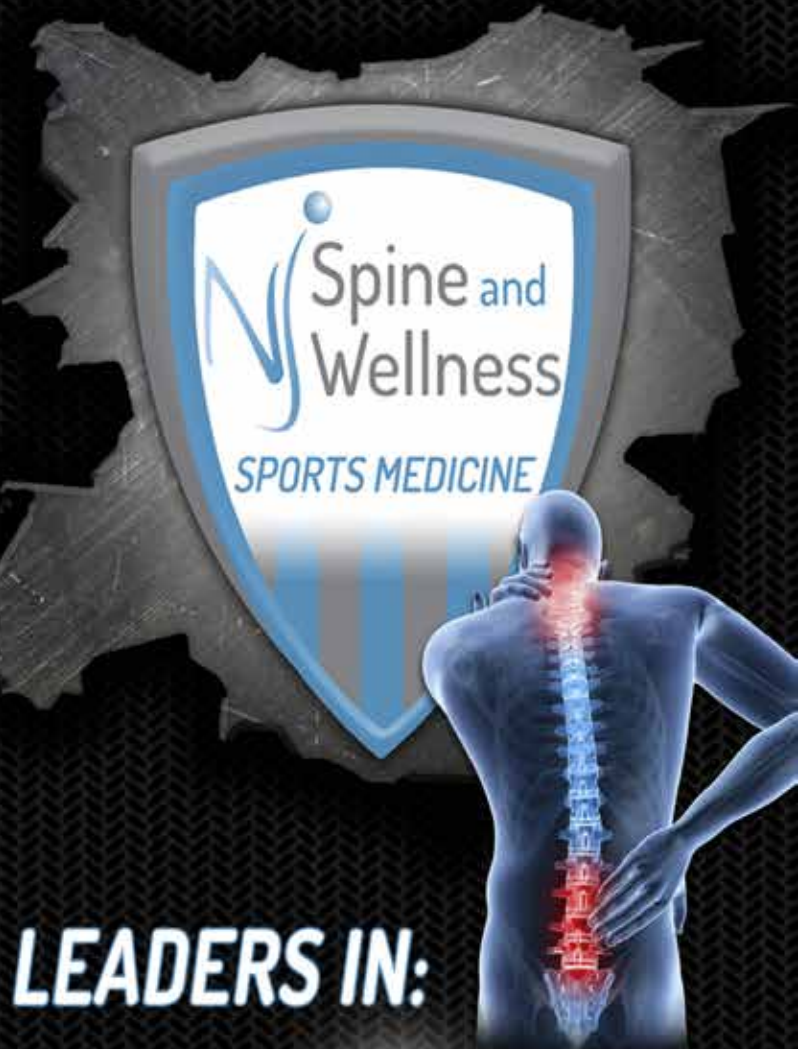


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Q: *What is Sciatica?
How Can I Treat It?*

A: Sciatica happens when the sciatic nerve becomes compressed. This can happen due to inflammation, spinal subluxations, co-existing conditions, injuries, and more. Since this nerve runs from the hips down the legs, patients can feel pain in their, low back, buttocks, hips or leg muscles. Some patients even get tingling sensations in their feet due to sciatica. Many feel restricted from everyday activities.

Sciatica symptoms do not go away until the root cause, sciatic nerve compression, is treated. In some circumstances, there is an underlying musculoskeletal issue that can also contribute to sciatica pain. Sciatica should be treated with appropriate rest, ice, and manual therapy until symptoms subside enough to engage in further treatment. A stint of physical therapy should then be performed to strengthen core muscles that support the spine. We offer several avenues to relieve sciatica pain and correct the root cause of the compression. Contact us today for more information!



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The Greater Princeton Area ASK THE DOCTOR
THE MILLSTONE TIMES • FAMILY TIMES

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QUESTION:

What can I be doing on my own to alleviate back pain while at work, home, or even driving?

ANSWER:

Breathe...but do it correctly.

When you are experiencing back pain, even simple movements can be excruciatingly painful. It is an involuntary response to protect your body from further pain, so you may find that you are stiffening your body and breathing shallowly to avoid moving the injured area. Natural abdominal breathing is an indispensable part of restoring injured areas to normal function. The diaphragm has connective tissue attachments to the lumbar spine so breathing can actually help restore normal movements.

To breathe correctly and effectively, gently place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth with your lips touching as you breathe in and out through your nose during the entire exercise. Place your hands on your lower abdomen to help focus your breath into this area. Begin, by taking a gentle, slow and full inhalation through your nose and at the same time blow your belly up like a big balloon. Next, gently exhale through your nose as you deflate your belly as if it is a deflating balloon. Breathe at your normal pace.

If you have been breathing into your upper diaphragm for an extended period of time, or shallow breathing, it may take a while to change your habit. You may also experience discomfort into your low back when you are beginning this exercise. Be persistent until it becomes part of your routine and the muscle in your back begins to relax.

Abdominal breathing exercise strengthens lung and heart function, promotes more efficient exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide, keeps the blood pure, the brain nourished, and calms the mind. Becoming more aware of your breath also creates a stronger connection between you and your healing process.



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**Dr. Helen Simigiannis,
MD, FACOG**

QUESTION:

What can I do to control my heavy periods this summer?

Many women begin to experience heavy and/or irregular bleeding in their 30's and 40's, as they begin to get closer to menopause. Heavy periods are more than just a hassle - they take a physical, social, and emotional toll as well. NovaSure® Endometrial Ablation is a 5 minute procedure used to treat heavy bleeding. It can be done in a doctor's office and it is performed without any incisions.

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most women report no pain and can return to most activities within a day.

This is how it works: Each month during a period, the uterine lining is shed and a new lining starts to grow. By preventing the re-growth of this uterine lining, we can stop periods sometimes permanently. Prior to the introduction of endometrial ablation as a treatment option, hysteroscopy with D&C was performed to thin the lining of the uterus. Alternatively, hormones and hysterectomy were offered. With advancements in medicine, Novasure endometrial ablation has become a well recognized treatment. Dr. Simigiannis will use the Novasure to permanently remove the cells that grow a lining in the uterus. Dr. Simigiannis is committed to providing you the best experience possible by having a Board Certified Anesthesiologist available making the experience pain free.

You may return to work the day following your procedure.

Please call Dr. Simigiannis at 609-448-7800 for more information and a consultation. A full exam and evaluation is always necessary prior to any procedure. If you are still considering child bearing, this is not the procedure for you. Medical insurance eligibility is evaluated and we encourage patients to check this as well.

For more information feel free to contact:

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QUESTION:

**When my feet are unhappy so is the rest of me.
How Can I Make My Feet Happier?**



As with anything else in life, if you show them some love you will feel them smile. How do you show your feet you love them?

The #1 reason for most foot problems is poorly fitting or poor choice of shoes. Too loose, too tight, no arch support, no cushion, too wide or too narrow and high heels can throw your foot into spasm, change your gait and throw off your posture. They may be cute and send a fashion

statement but you **may be causing real damage to your tootsies**. These fashionable feats may be causing:

- Osteoarthritis often referred to as the "wear and tear" arthritis.
- Hammer toes; an abnormal bend in a toe due to arthritic changes or muscle imbalance.
- Plantar fasciitis is an inflammation at the point where the ligament inserts at the heel bone.
- Bunion deformities cause a painful range of motion at the metatarso-phalangeal joints, possible overlapping of the first and second toes.
- Blisters
- ingrown toenails
- corns and calluses

- stress fractures
- heel spurs
- athlete's foot
- fungal toenails
- plantar warts
- bursitis

Once your feet become inflamed or fatigued, the rest of your body will bear the effects. Show those feet a little support with shoes that fit and keep them happy.

If your feet need some TLC, bring them in for an evaluation to stop the problems before they progress.

Family Foot & Ankle Center of Central Jersey provides comprehensive care for infants, children, teenagers, adults, and seniors. For more information on foot or ankle problems, feel free to contact:

Dr. Holli Alster at Family Foot & Ankle Center of Central Jersey
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Dr. Holli Alster

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FAMILY FOOT & ANKLE CENTER
of Central Jersey

QUESTION:

What's the best way to treat knee arthritis?

Consider a non-surgical treatment that really works!

Osteoarthritis of the knee is the #1 leading cause of disability in the U.S. Over 27 million people suffer with knee arthritis and that number continues to grow. With knee arthritis, the cartilage breaks down and wears away, leaving the bones to rub together causing pain swelling stiffness and limited range of motion. As the cartilage breaks down, the knee loses its lubricating fluid. We found that by replacing this lubricating fluid with a natural substance called Hyalgan, the lubrication is restored and many patients experience amazing pain relief.



WHAT IS HYALGAN AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Hyalgan is a natural lubricating fluid that acts as a lubricant and shock absorber inside the knee joint. The substance in Hyalgan is hyaluronic acid which is normally found in high levels in healthy joints. Replacing the hyaluronic acid with Hyalgan lubricates the joint and reduces pain. Hyalgan has been administered over 40 million times and has been proven to provide long-lasting relief of knee pain from osteoarthritis.

WHAT IF YOU ALREADY TRIED KNEE INJECTIONS?

If you have had injections like this in the past and experienced poor results, there is still hope! Many doctors in this area offer similar injections, but very few use precision fluoroscopy guidance. Fluoroscopy guidance ensures that the pain relieving Hyalgan reaches the knee capsule where it bonds with the joint fluid to create a lubricating and cushioning layer. Without fluoroscopy, it is estimated that doctors "miss" the capsule over 30% of the time resulting in poor results. We want each and every one of our patients to have the greatest chance of success, so every injection is done with precision fluoroscopy guidance to ensure that the Hyalgan gets into the capsule 100% of the time. Because of this, patients who previously felt little to no relief with non-fluoroscopy guided injection are now getting excellent results.

The other "big difference" in our results is the multitude of other supportive care options that we have available to enhance the effectiveness of the Hyalgan procedure. These options include state of the art medical laser treatment, physical therapy, manipulation, corrective osteoarthritis bracing (takes pressure off the damaged section of the knee), and natural anti-inflammatory products. The combination of these treatments offers you what we feel is the most comprehensive non-surgical knee treatment program available.

DOES IT HURT?

Many of our patients report that they feel little to no pain at all! We do everything possible to minimize any pain from the procedure, from pain relieving spray and a local anesthetic, to precision guidance that ensures we are always in the right spot.

WILL MY INSURANCE COVER HYALGAN?

This procedure is covered by most major insurance companies including Medicare. Our insurance department pre-verifies every patient.

WHO WILL BE PERFORMING THE HYALGAN PROCEDURE?

Dr. Scot Paris is the medical physician who performs the Hyalgan injection. Dr. Paris is trained as a general surgeon and has extensive experience with a variety of surgical procedures. With his conservative approach, he has excelled in the non-surgical treatment of knee pain with the use of fluoroscopy guided Hyalgan injections.

SO HOW DO I KNOW IF YOUR KNEE PAIN TREATMENT PROGRAM WILL HELP ME?

If you are tired of suffering with painful arthritis of the knee, and you want to see if the latest advances in non-surgical treatment can help, all you have to do is call 732-683-1800 to set up a risk free consultation. During the consultation all of your questions will be answered in a warm and friendly environment. Knee replacement surgery is a very extreme measure to take without considering all of your other options first. Once it's done there is no turning back. For that reason we encourage you to schedule an appointment to see if you are a candidate for Hyalgan treatment.

We are proud to offer our patients a comprehensive knee pain treatment program that includes the best non-surgical methods to relieve pain all under one roof. We look forward to having the opportunity to help you feel better. Take the first step in ending your knee pain and call to schedule an appointment today!

Dr. Scott Paris using precision fluoroscopy guidance to ensure the best results possible.



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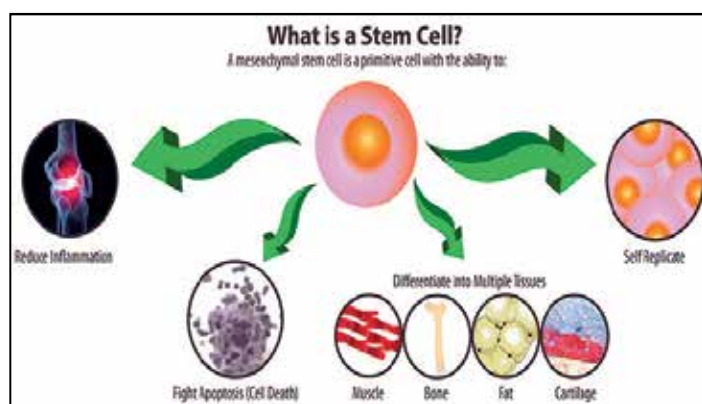
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QUESTION:

Can amniotic stem cell therapy help my knee pain?

Millions of patients suffer with knee pain due to arthritis. The options for treatment, until now, have been limited to physical therapy, steroid injections, viscosupplementation injections, or joint replacement surgery. Central Jersey Spine & Wellness now offers a new cutting-edge treatment option called **amniotic membrane stem cell injections**. **Amniotic membrane stem cell injections** may be used to successfully treat patients with knee osteoarthritis when other conventional treatments have failed.



HOW DO AMNIOTIC MEMBRANE STEM CELL INJECTIONS WORK?

Amniotic stem cell injections offer the ability to heal damaged tissue naturally. With amniotic stem cell therapy, stem cells from amniotic tissues are injected directly into your knee. These stem cells have strong anti-inflammatory properties. However, stem cell therapy goes far beyond the benefits of standard "injection therapy." While cortisone and other drugs only provide temporary pain relief, stem cells actually restore degenerated tissue while providing pain relief. The growth factors in amniotic stem cells may replace damaged cells in your body. Additionally, stem cell injections contain hyaluronic acid, which lubricates joints and tendons, easing the pain and helping restore mobility. We also use precision guided fluoroscopy to ensure the stem cells are injected into exactly the right location. For optimal results.

WHAT BENEFITS DOES AMNIOTIC STEM CELL THERAPY OFFER?

- Amniotic stem cells contain no steroids. Instead, the injections rely on **naturally occurring anti-inflammatory agents**, such as cytokines.
- Amniotic stem cells contain **hyaluronic acid**, which lubricates cartilage and promotes new cartilage growth.
- Amniotic stem cells contain **growth factors**, which stimulate tissue growth.

- With amniotic stem cells, there is **no threat of patient rejection**.
- Lastly, amniotic fluid is a **highly concentrated source** of stem cells, which makes this type of stem cell injection preferable over embryonic stem cells and the patient's own stem cells (from fat or bone marrow).

ARE AMNIOTIC STEM CELL INJECTIONS SAFE?

Yes. More than 10,000 injections have been performed without a single reported adverse side effect.

- Amniotic stem cell therapy is a preferred type of stem cell therapy because the cells come from an immunoprivileged site, which means that patient-rejection is extremely rare.
- The use of amniotic stem cells is well researched, safe, and effective. Amniotic stem cells have been used by ophthalmologists and plastic surgeons for about 20 years.
- All amniotic stem cell donors go through a rigorous screening process, as determined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB).

AM I A CANDIDATE FOR STEM CELL THERAPY?

Patients suffering with knee pain due to arthritis may be considered as candidates for amniotic stem cell therapy. Regenerative medicine is growing in popularity and is helping more and more people live with less pain and suffering. If you have already tried conventional treatments, and are looking for another safe and effective option, consider amniotic stem cell therapy.

Call to schedule a consultation with one of our doctors to determine if amniotic stem cell therapy is right for you.



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QUESTION:

We have always heard of UV protection from the sun but now they are talking about harmful blue lights. What does this mean to me and my health?

ANSWER:

UV is short for ultraviolet, a color on the light spectrum. This light is electromagnetic radiation, which is present in sunlight (even through cloud cover), and also produced by electric arcs, and specialized lights such as mercury-vapor lamps, tanning lamps, and black lights. UV light is associated with suntan, freckles and sunburn on skin which are the familiar effects of over-exposure to it, along with higher risk of skin cancer. It has similar effects to your eye and is known to be responsible for cornea burns and cataracts.

Less known is the effect blue lights have on your health. Blue lights are found inside and outside in your environment. It is naturally emitted by the sun but also comes from fluorescent bulbs, and LED screens like your computer and phone. Blue or Blue-violet is very close to Ultraviolet and is penetrating and harmful to your eyes. It has been linked to damage to the retina, causing long term visual impairment such as Macular Degeneration. It has been estimated that without protection, by the year 2050 over 265 million people could suffer with this condition.

While we are all susceptible to these rays, children are particularly

vulnerable. Their eyes are developing and they are exposed more-so due to their lifestyle. They are three times more exposed, spending more time outdoors. Their pupils are larger, letting more harmful rays in and a younger lens is more crystalline and transparent, letting in more light than an adult.

Visionaries in the optical field have come up with a clear solution to harmful exposure to UV and blue rays. They have developed no-glare protective lenses that filter out the harmful rays. We carry Crizal Prevencia No-Glare lenses which provide 25 times more UV protection than going without eyewear. Not only does it help protect the sensitive tissue, it also reduces glare which aids in night vision.

I invite you to visit my office for an exam to discuss your eye care health and the same for your family. We take most medical insurances and have a wonderful selection of frames should you need glasses. A visit to us may be your first line of ocular defense!

Check out our website for more information
<http://monmouthvision.com/>

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Monmouth Vision Associates

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Question:

I have suffered from back pain for many years and hesitate to have surgery. What are my other options?

Answer:

Most people will experience minor back problems and pain at one time or another, especially as time elapses or if there is a family history or lifestyle risks. If you sit for long periods, lift heavy objects or have a degenerative disease, such as osteoporosis, then you may be more prone. Most back problems occur in adults aged 20 to 50. Occurrence under the age of 20 or in adults over the age of 50 is more likely to have a serious cause.



As a fellowship trained orthopedic surgeon specializing in Spine surgery, my goals are to restore you back to your optimal functioning level using the most current treatment options. If your pain is severe or lasts longer than 4 weeks, I can provide immediate diagnosis and treatment of the following common conditions:

Sudden (acute) injuries

- An injury to the muscles or ligaments in the back such as a sprain
- A fracture or dislocation of the spine, which may lead to permanent paralysis
- A torn or ruptured disc (a herniated disc)
- Compression of the nerves in the lower back (cauda equina syndrome)

Chronic Diseases

- Spinal Stenosis – The joints of the spine become enlarged and the spinal nerves can be compressed
- Spondylosis- Inflammation and arthritis of the joints in the spine
- Spondylolisthesis – Slipping of one spinal bone over another, usually can be caused by degeneration
- Degenerative Disc Disease – The discs become dry and shrink, and the edges of the bones rub on one another

Overuse Injuries often caused by using poor body mechanics which can lead to degeneration, muscle spasm and pain.

Non-Operative Treatments

Dr. Grigory Goldberg at AOSMI can help you find the cause and get you on the road to recovery – often the same day. We offer swift, accurate diagnosis and immediate pain management where your pain can possibly be relieved without the need for invasive treatment or surgery, in some cases the same day.



Some of these non-surgical options are:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| ✓ Massage | ✓ Physical Therapy |
| ✓ Acupuncture | ✓ Epidural and Facet Injections |
| ✓ Bracing | ✓ Steroid Injections or medication |

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EXTENDING SHOE LIFE

By Susan Heckler

Shoes are expensive, and some of us develop an attachment to our favorites. To keep them looking and smelling great and a welcome addition to our closet, here are some helpful tricks for happy shoes and happier feet. You may want to check with manufacturers before trying these cleaning hacks.

Toothpaste can put a whiter smile on your shoes as well as your teeth. It acts well as a cleaning agent for dirty sneakers. Just apply a bit of toothpaste to an old toothbrush, work it into the dirty spots on the rubber, making sure to scrub the sides well. Then work the toothpaste into the fabric of the shoes. Let it sit for a few minutes, and then wipe it off with a damp towel.

Rubbing alcohol, available at supermarkets and drug stores, can be used to safely remove stains from finished leather. Use a Q-tip, or a cotton ball, and soak it up gently with some rubbing alcohol. Rub the alcohol into the stain on the shoes, and let that sit for about 30 minutes.

Barefooting can lead to sweaty, stinky shoes. Removing smelly odors is a vital part of cleaning shoes! Try putting a bit of baking soda into your shoes to freshen them up, and let them sit overnight. Baking soda has special properties that enable it to effectively remove odors from many objects and appliances around the house.

Suede surfaces scratch and stain very easily. Nail files come super-handly. First use a soft cloth to gently rub the area with the stain, to try and remove as much of the surface spotting as possible. Gently rub the spot with a nail file or sandpaper, until the stain has diminished in appearance. Take it slow so you only remove as little suede as possible.

As you know from laundry, vinegars are great for removing odors, because they have great acidic properties. Try soaking stinky sneakers in a vinegar solution, using around two cups of vinegar mixed in with two gallons of water. Dunk the shoes in, and keep them submerged.

Patent leather shoes are extremely easy to care for, and usually can easily be given a shine with store-bought patent leather cleaners. Better yet, try applying some mineral oil or petroleum jelly on a clean cloth, and rub off the scuff marks on the shoes. Use a little more to buff the entire shoe to be consistent.

Spilled grease on your blue suede shoes? Cornmeal can be rubbed into greasy areas on suede shoes and left on to soak up the grease or oil from the stain.

Afterward, brush it off with a cloth.



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DO'S AND DON'TS OF DRY SHAMPOO

By Aleena McIlvaine

Instead of throwing your hair in a bun or putting on an ever popular "dad hat" when you're having a bad hair day, simply spritz a bit of dry shampoo throughout your roots, give it a little tousle, and be on with the rest of your day feeling confident. When it comes to using dry shampoo products, whether it be a spray or powder, no one knows exactly what they're doing. Everyone understands that it must cover their roots in order for it to make a difference in the look and feel of their hair, however, not many people really think about how to go about this. One of the biggest mistakes is simply applying it too close to the head, when it should be about ten inches away from the roots. Many people start out quite concerned because the spray comes out white, but this goes away as soon as it is brushed out. The product should sit for a minute or two before either brushing or combing it through with your fingers. This will leave your hair refreshed and looking brand new.

Dry shampoo can not only breath life back into oily hair, it can also help curls last longer, keep bobby pins in place, and hold a tease (backcomb) for longer. The starch or silica in the dry shampoo will coat the natural oils in the hair which keeps the curls from clumping together. The same products also keep bobby pins from slipping out of place by giving them a little extra grip. Dry shampoo has many other odd but practical uses other than keeping you hair looking clean. If you feel your brows are looking a bit sparse, you can spray some on your finger or a q-tip and brush it through your brows for a more naturally full look. The same starch that pulls oil out of your hair, can also pull oil/grease out of real oil stains in clothing, you simply spray the dry shampoo on the problem area before throwing it in the washer.

A good dry shampoo is a must have for any beauty lover. It keeps your hair looking fresh and clean between washes and can be used for other everyday quick fixes. Most products won't cost more than about \$15, which is a steal for something that can really save you from a bad hair day. It's not hard to love your hair when it always looks freshly washed thanks to dry shampoo.



11 NATURAL WAYS TO GET RID OF DANDRUFF

By: Krusha Vaiyda

1. ASPIRIN

Keep flaking in check by crushing two aspirins to a fine powder and adding it to the normal amount of shampoo you use each time you wash your hair. Leave the mixture on your hair for 1-2 minutes, then rinse well and wash again with plain shampoo.

2. TEA TREE OIL

Shampoos with just 5 percent tea tree oil significantly improve the severity of dandruff. You can also add a few drops of tea tree oil to your favorite shampoo as you wash normally.

3. BAKING SODA

Wet your hair and then rub a handful of baking soda vigorously into your scalp. Skip the shampoo and go right to rinsing. Your hair may get dried out at first, but after a few weeks your scalp will start producing natural oils, leaving your hair softer and free of flakes.

4. APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Mix a quarter cup apple cider vinegar with a quarter cup water in a spray bottle and spritz on your scalp. Wrap your head in a towel and let sit for 15 minutes to an hour, then wash your hair as usual. Do this twice a week.

5. MOUTHWASH

To treat a bad case of dandruff, wash your hair with your regular shampoo, and then rinse with an alcohol-based mouthwash. Follow with your regular conditioner.

6. COCONUT OIL

Before showering, massage 3-5 tablespoons of coconut oil into your scalp and let sit for about an hour. Shampoo normally. You can also look for a shampoo that already contains coconut oil.

7. LEMON

Just massage 2 tablespoons lemon juice into your scalp and rinse with water. Then stir 1 teaspoon lemon juice into 1 cup water and rinse your hair with it. Repeat this daily until your dandruff disappears.

8. SALT

Grab a saltshaker and shake some salt onto your dry scalp. Then work it through your hair, giving your scalp a massage. You'll find you've worked out the dry, flaky skin and are ready for a shampoo.

9. ALOE VERA

Stop yourself from scratching by massaging Aloe Vera into your scalp before shampooing. The cooling effects of Aloe Vera will soothe the itch.

10. GARLIC

Crush garlic and rub it into your scalp. To avoid that potent smell, mix crushed garlic with honey and massage into the scalp before washing as usual.

11. OLIVE OIL

Massage about 10 drops into your scalp and cover with a shower cap overnight. Follow your regular shampoo routine in the morning. For a quicker cure, look for a shampoo that contains olive oil.

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SHOULD YOU WASH BEFORE YOU WEAR?

By Susan Heckler

Clothes look flawless hanging on that rack. You know that once you wash it, it never looks quite as crisp. Do you really need wash them before taking them for a spin?

Absolutely!

Fabric often contains skin-irritating dyes and formaldehyde-releasing chemicals used for wrinkle and shrink resistance and dyes can also cause allergic reactions. Even cotton is full of pesticides and herbicides, unless it's organic. It is one of the heaviest sprayed crops.

Clothing is manufactured in factories that are less than pristine. The materials are exposed to dust, pollutants, animals, bugs.... Once the clothing is shipped to the store and is on the sales floor, it gets tried on by shoppers. Cleanliness may be an issue as well as infectious skin conditions (including fungus, bacteria, and viruses) and even scabies or lice.

This is important for anything touching your skin, including sheets and towels.

GREAT TIPS FOR OUTSTANDING MAKEUP

By Aleena McIlvaine

There is no right or wrong way to express yourself with makeup. When you spend the time to actually do it, you want to look as beautiful as possible for as long as possible. Whether you're a professional makeup artist or just someone that likes to experiment, these are a few tips and tricks will help create a flawless look that will last all day.

EYES

- Sweep a shadow that's about the same shade as your skin, all over the lid and up to the brow bone. Putting this shadow first will set the cream base and give a smooth transition from skin to color.
- For the sharpest eyeliner wings possible, use a small piece of tape that goes from the corner of your eye, out to the tail of your brow. Not only will this insure they are sharp and smooth, it also guarantees that they are even.
- If you are using very pigmented eye shadows, do your eye look before any other part of your face, this way, if there is fall out, it is easy to fix without ruining the hard work you put into your face makeup.

FOUNDATION

- Prime your face with a spray, gel, or cream. Each brand will promise different results for their primers, but generally they fill pores and smooth out your skin. It also gives the foundation a solid, even base to blend into.
- After your foundation, highlight, and contour are all completed, set your face with a setting spray. This will lock everything in and keep it from sliding off throughout the day. If you don't have an actual setting spray, a quick spritz of hairspray will also do the trick.

CONTOUR/HIGHLIGHT

- Try doing your cream highlighting and contouring before you do the rest of your foundation. Blending out the highlight/contour before foundation makes it look even more natural on the face.
- When setting the cream highlight or under eye concealer, put an excess of powder and let it sit for a few minutes while you're doing something else. This is called "baking" and it uses the little bit of heat from your skin to warm the powder and keep those areas bright and crease free.

LIPS

- If you don't have a lip liner to match every shade in your collection, use lip liner close to your skin tone to keep even the boldest shades from feathering.
- An easy way to make any lipstick have a matte finish is to put tissue over your mouth and dust translucent powder over it. The powder will set the color and leave your lips looking and feeling beautifully matte.



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Coach's Corner

By Jill Garaffa

How to Make a Big Life Decision

Dear Jill,

I've heard that life coaching can help when you are having difficulty making a big decision. I feel very torn with my career and am hoping you can help. I have an opportunity to take a new job. The offer seems exciting and I think I'd really enjoy working for this other company, however: the timing, location and the salary are not ideal. I'm afraid if I don't take it, I will lose the opportunity, but if I do take it, I might regret it. How do I narrow down my choices and feel good about my decision?

Signed,
Career Conundrum

Dear Career Conundrum:

Thanks for writing with your question! I can offer you a few suggestions to guide your thinking from a life coaching standpoint. These tips will be helpful whether you are making a decision about your career, relationship, your health or any life area.

First, before you decide about the next job, it's wise to explore why you want to leave your current job. While the names, faces and locations will change, you will likely recreate the same conditions if the core energy is not addressed first. As the saying goes, "You take yourself with you." So, consider: What needs are/are not being met at your current position? What do you love/loathe about your current position? What would need to change in order for you to be willing to stay? Remember: It takes two sets of people to make something work. If you are unhappy, then take an honest look at your role in creating the unhappiness. This could open a door to repair your current situation and help you prevent the same circumstance from repeating itself with different people in the next job.

Next: establish "conditions for happiness criteria" for your career. Distinguish what you need from what you want in your job. This will help you decide if the next position aligns with what you wish for in a career. While no job is perfect, consider your core values and what is deeply important to you so they can be honored with your new position.

Last: don't think, just decide. Try making your decision in 5 seconds. This is a very quick & simple mind trick that will help you make the right decision every time. Literally count: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1: Decide. And commit to it 100%. In your deepest instincts, in your heart & soul, you know what to do. The problem is you have spent so much time in your mind thinking about it, analyzing it, agonizing over it, playing all kinds of different scenarios out, talking yourself out of it or into it, that your mind is so cluttered up with options that you have become paralyzed with indecision. And, the longer you wait, the harder it is. You know what to do. If you weren't thinking about it so much, what is your gut telling you? Do that.

Life coaching can support you with sorting through all the details of your life and gain clarity on your best choices. Life coaching will never give you advice or tell you what to do, but instead, bring your own answers into view to build your confidence to live the life you desire.

Wishing you peace, clarity and purpose!
Jill

Jill Garaffa, MS, OTR/L, PCC, ELI-MP is a Licensed Occupational Therapist and Professional Certified Life Coach providing Health & Wellness Coaching for individuals and organizations. For more information, please visit www.seedsofchangeoaching.com or call 732-859-6962.

If you have a life situation where you feel stuck or stalled, and would like coaching, please email jill@seedsofchangeoaching.com or visit www.seedsofchangeoaching.com and click "contact us" to be featured in a future column.

STRESS & YOUR HEART HEALTH

How do you react to a stressful situation?



Do you shut down or lash out? Take to unhealthy habits to deal with the pressure building up inside of you? How you handle life challenges can have a major impact on factors that have been proven to negatively impact your heart health.

Stress may affect behaviors and factors that increase heart disease risk, including high blood pressure, cholesterol levels, smoking, physical inactivity and overeating. So step back and take a deep breath — for your heart's sake.

OVERALL BODY IMPACT

Bodies react to stress in different ways. You may experience a headache, back strain or even stomach pains if you're stressed out.

Your energy level can be greatly reduced and your sleeping patterns disturbed.

All of these factors can set off a chain of events that leads to a potentially compromised cardiovascular system. When you're stressed, your body releases adrenaline, a hormone that temporarily causes your breathing and heart rate to speed up and your blood pressure to rise. Depending upon how long you're stressed, your body may experience this set of circumstances off and on for days at a time.

And although the link between stress and heart disease isn't clearly defined by organizations like the American Heart Association, chronic stress may cause some people to depend on unhealthy lifestyle habits, like drinking too much alcohol, which can increase your blood pressure and may damage the artery walls.

DEALING WITH STRESS

Managing stress is a challenge, but a necessity if you hope to be a picture of good health. A few studies cited by the American Heart Association have examined how well treatment or therapies work in reducing the effects of stress on cardiovascular disease, and the results have shown positive links.

The best place to start when dealing with your stress is a qualified professional. Speak to your physician about how you're feeling. They will be able to refer you to a specialist who can offer effective treatment or preventive strategies.

EVENING RITUALS CAN IMPROVE YOUR LIFE

By Briana Siciliano

Waking up happy is the perfect way to start our days! It would be incredible to wake up in a great mood everyday, right? By following evening rituals and cleansing your spirit, freeing your mind, and organizing your life (and business), you can surely have a great tomorrow.

Rituals have strong influences on our feelings, behaviors, and thoughts, and without even realizing it, we follow our own personal rituals everyday. In the morning, what's the first thing you do? Do you have a specific routine you follow, for example shutting off your alarm, using a bathroom, and brushing your teeth in that exact order?

If so, you have set your morning ritual without even realizing it! Although plenty of people follow their morning rituals, not many people follow evening rituals. It is time to change that. Evening rituals guarantee a pleasing, refreshing rest period through the night. When you lay in bed before falling asleep, you tend to think of the things you have, and have not yet, accomplished. Like morning rituals, evening rituals are not the same for everyone. Rituals are meant to be personalized, after all, so design your evening rituals around what works for you.

Evening rituals depend on your needs, but to get started on designing and following a smooth path to a great night's sleep and an even greater tomorrow, try out a few of these rituals:

- **Write down what you're proud of!** Everyday we successfully achieve many small victories (sometimes we achieve major victories!) and by the end of the night, we fail to acknowledge the progress that we make. We stress over the failures instead of successes in the middle of the night. Well, it is time to change that. By writing down three (or more) things that you are proud of, and focusing on the things that you did right throughout your day, you will wake up more motivated to continue making progress. No matter what kind of day you are having, you are bound to have at least two positive moments.
- **Make time for family!** At the end of the day, a great evening ritual could be spending time with your spouse and/or children. Reading books to little ones, talking about your child's day, and/or complimenting your spouse on something you have recently noticed and appreciated will result in a perfect way to end your day.
- **Turn off electronics!** The brightness of electronic screens keeps you up longer by tricking you into believing that it is the time to send emails, text messages, and calls instead of winding down for bed time. Put your phone, tablet, and/or laptop away and spend some time reading a book, preparing an outfit for tomorrow, or drinking a late night treat (a warm cup of milk, hot chocolate, or water; avoid sodas and caffeine!) When's the last time you slept like a baby? A few months—possibly a few years—ago? Let's change that! You deserve nothing but the best; let's make sure all your days and nights are the best they can be!

NEW BLOOD TEST FOR DEPRESSION

By Susan Heckler

Depression affects nearly 7 percent of U.S. adults each year. Depression comes in many forms; Major Depression (Clinical Depression), Chronic Depression (Dysthymia), Atypical Depression, Postpartum Depression, Bipolar Depression (Manic Depression), Seasonal Depression (SAD) and Psychotic Depression.

Clinical or Major Depression is marked by a depressed mood most of the day, particularly in the morning, and a loss of interest in normal activities and relationships. These symptoms are present every day for at least 2 weeks. According to WebMD, symptoms may also include:

- Fatigue or loss of energy almost every day
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt almost every day
- Impaired concentration, indecisiveness
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping almost every day
- Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in almost all activities nearly every
- Restlessness or feeling slowed down
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
- Significant weight loss or gain (a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month)



There is a new blood test that measures the levels of nine genetic indicators in the blood. The test works by measuring the blood concentration of the RNA markers. A cell's RNA molecules are what interpret its genetic code and then carry out those instructions from DNA. After blood is drawn, the RNA is isolated, measured and compared to RNA levels expected in a non-depressed person's blood. A study published online September 16, 2014 in *Translational Psychiatry* (with funding from the U.S. National

Institute of Mental Health and the Davee Foundation) established the test's effectiveness with 32 adults who were diagnosed as depressed and 32 non-depressed adults. All of the study participants were between 21 and 79 years old.

While the sample of the population that was used is small and further studies are expected, this could greatly enrich the diagnosis and treatment of depression. The test is not available to the public yet. They would need to test it out on a larger segment of the population before it would be considered for approval by the Food and Drug Administration.



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OPTIMISM HELPS YOUR HEART

Smiling, laughing and simply being happy can make all the difference for our hearts. In fact, new research shows that people with higher levels of optimism may be less at risk for heart failure than those who are more pessimistic.

And with the breadth of heart failure's effect on the nation – about 5.1 million Americans are afflicted every year according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – a little extra optimism is surely needed.

Heart Failure Statistics

Other eye-opening statistics from the CDC include:

- One in nine deaths include heart failure as a contributing cause.
- About half those who develop heart failure die within five years of diagnosis.

Heart failure costs the nation about \$32 billion worth of health care services, medications and missed days of work annually.

The main behaviors that can increase your risk for heart failure are, the CDC reports:

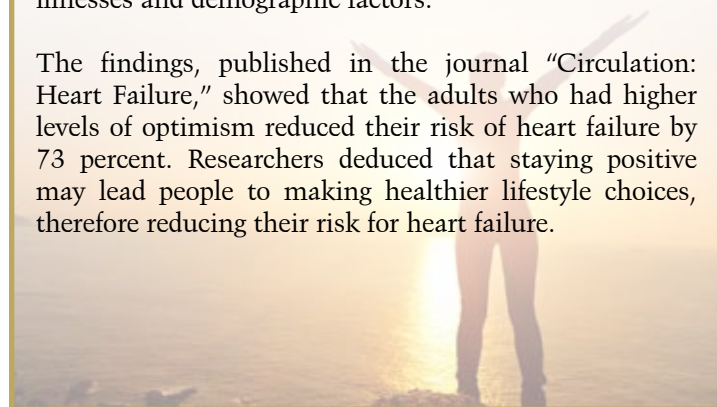
- Smoking tobacco.
- Eating foods high in fat, cholesterol, and sodium.
- Not getting enough physical activity.
- Being obese.

Positivity Study

In the study linking happiness to heart health, optimism was defined as "an expectation that positive things will happen." Researchers from the University of Michigan and Harvard University analyzed the linkage between optimism and heart failure diagnoses in older adults, since statistics show that people ages 65 years and older are most prone to heart failure diagnoses.

Researchers gathered, analyzed and translated data of more than 6,800 older adults, including health history, background information and psychological data over the course of four years. They also took into account factors that could affect heart failure risk, such as chronic illnesses and demographic factors.

The findings, published in the journal "Circulation: Heart Failure," showed that the adults who had higher levels of optimism reduced their risk of heart failure by 73 percent. Researchers deduced that staying positive may lead people to making healthier lifestyle choices, therefore reducing their risk for heart failure.



REDUCING CHILD ANXIETY ABOUT CAMP

By Susan Heckler

Summer camp memories are some of the best you can have. Whether it is a local day camp or a sleepover camp, the experience is one your child will always remember. Moms and Dads have their own fears and anxieties sending their kids off to parts unknown. How you handle your child's departure will have deep meaning to them and how they will handle being on their own.

A child's summer camp separation anxiety can show itself in a number of ways, including:

- Reluctance to attend the camp
- Avoiding being left alone
- Nightmares about separation
- Unrealistic fears about what may happen while they are away
- Physical complaints when separated
- Excessive distress when separation is anticipated

Frequent physical complaints such as:

- Nausea • Stomach problems • Headaches • Being hot or cold

Helpful hints:

- Remind your child that it is normal to be anxious about going away for the first time
- Show confidence that they'll have a great time
- Remind them about other anxiety causing experiences they loved
- Provide lots of attention in the days preceding the separation
- Don't drag out the goodbyes; make them short, sweet and caring.

They will survive, they will thrive, and they will look back on your crying as the bus drove away (or cheering the way every other parent who had 8 weeks of freedom ahead did), and laugh.

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KINDNESS - Teaching Kids To Be Kind To Friends



For most young children, friendships come easily. OK, so your child may not have any idea what that kid's name is, but she is playing nicely with him... until he steals her ball... and she pushes him -- time out. New friends are a lot of fun, but they also introduce uncertainty and conflict. Help your child overcome these challenges by building empathy and practicing kindness. These skills can be nourished, and playtime is the perfect time to do it. Try these games at home and help your child practice six friendly skills:

SAY HELLO

Gather some stuffed animals or action figures. Select one and hide it behind your back. Then ask, "Where's Bunny?" Slowly and shyly bring out the friend (Bunny might be too scared and hop behind you again). Then grab another stuffed animal and have him introduce himself. "Hello, Bunny! My name is Bear!" Invite your child to keep the game going until everyone is introduced.

SMILE

Play this feelings game in front of a large mirror. With a big smile on your face say, "Hi, friend. I'm happy to see you!" Watch your child's smile grow, too. Then let your child give it a try. Practice other feelings to contrast the many expressions we show on our faces.

SAY PLEASE

Try this variation of Simon Says. Instead of saying "Simon Says," the person in charge must say "please" to get a response from the group. Such as: "Jump on one foot." (no response) "Jump on one foot, please." (response) You might also try the game "Mother May I?" Substitute your child's name for "mother," and then talk about how it makes us feel when we politely ask our friends for permission.

TAKE TURNS

Create an obstacle course. Inside, you might use sofa pillows to jump on or a coffee table to crawl under. Outside you might use a hula hoop to hop through or a jump rope to walk on top of. Take turns going through each step of the course. Say "my turn" as you demonstrate, then say "your turn" as your Sproutlet follows.

SHARE

Fill two bowls with a different type of finger food. You might fill one bowl with grapes and the other with pretzels. Then ask, "If we both want pretzels, how can we share?" Give your child some time to problem solve. You can also turn this into a fun counting game. Say, "I'm going to share this many grapes with you..." and clap your hands a number of times. Give that number of grapes to your child. Then have her take a turn clapping and sharing.

CLEAN UP

Connect goodbye with cleaning up. At home, before a nap or an outing, say goodbye to the toy room and sing Barney's "Clean Up" song as you return toys to their places. When you are at a friend's house, your child can continue this goodbye habit. Helping with clean-up is one more way to show kindness to friend, because it shows that you care about her toys as much as you care about your toys.

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ATRIUM SENIOR LIVING IN MATAWAN IS A MUST-SEE

By Susan Heckler

When you visit ATRIUM SENIOR LIVING of Matawan's community, you can really appreciate what lifestyle living is all about. The interior is charming, very homey with a variety of common areas to suit every mood and occasion. I recently attended a business networking event there and was astounded at how un-assisted-living-like the facility is.

Your families will enjoy visiting and having the comforts and conveniences of intimate rooms or a larger social hall to spend time with you. The home-like common area such as all seasons' living room, outdoor patio with gardening and billiard room are conducive to an active social life, so clear your social calendar! You can be as busy as you choose.

Incoming residents can choose their apartment, and enjoy a private one bedroom or studio apartment for independent living with the assistance available for a sense of security as well as convenient amenities and hospitality services.

You can use your own private kitchenette or enjoy delicious meals in a restaurant-style dining room. They offer energizing fitness and wellness programs, and a diverse range of cultural and social activities. They also offer concierge service, weekly housekeeping services, courtesy van transportation to ATRIUM scheduled events and activities as well as medical appointments, and so much more.

Conveniently located coming from all parts of New Jersey and New York, Matawan is in a quiet, green, peaceful corner of Monmouth County.

Residents can settle in for a long, peaceful time, because they are a real continuum of care community with senior living, post-acute care and transitional care all in the family. Once you are settled in, you have the option to age in place as they offer 24 hour nursing staff and trained aides who offer help with dignity and cheer. Wound Care, Palliative Care, Memory Care, Respite Care and Hospice Care are available within our campus.

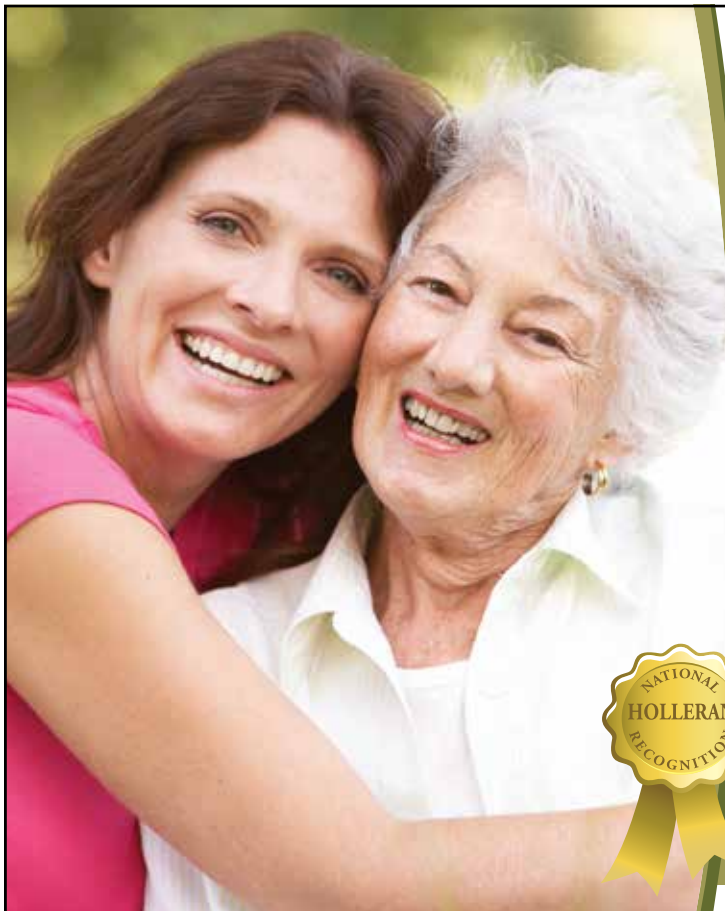
Residents are welcome to keep their own doctors and have assistance getting to visits. Atrium will communicate closely with their staffs. Many other practitioners come to the facility, or are easily accessible:

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ELDER ABUSE

Abuse can happen in many places, including the older person's home, a family member's house, an assisted living facility, or a nursing home.

There are many types of abuse:

- Physical abuse happens when someone causes bodily harm by hitting, pushing, or slapping.
- Emotional abuse, sometimes called psychological abuse, can include a caregiver saying hurtful words, yelling, threatening, or repeatedly ignoring the older person. Keeping that person from seeing close friends and relatives is another form of emotional abuse.
- Neglect occurs when the caregiver does not try to respond to the older person's needs.
- Abandonment is leaving a senior alone without planning for his or her care.
- Sexual abuse involves a caregiver forcing an older adult to watch or be part of sexual acts.
- Financial abuse happens when money or belongings are stolen. It can include forging checks, taking someone else's retirement and Social Security benefits, or using another person's credit cards and bank accounts. It also includes changing names on a will, bank account, life insurance policy, or title to a house without permission from the older person. Financial abuse is becoming a widespread and hard-to-detect issue. Even someone you've never met can steal your financial information using the telephone or email. Be careful about sharing any financial information over the phone or online—you don't know who will use it.
- Healthcare fraud can be committed by doctors, hospital staff, and other healthcare workers. It includes overcharging, billing twice for the same service, falsifying Medicaid or Medicare claims, or charging for care that wasn't provided. Older adults and caregivers should keep an eye out for this type of fraud.

Most victims of abuse are women, but some are men. Likely targets are older people who have no family or friends nearby and people with disabilities, memory problems, or dementia.

Abuse can happen to any older person, but often affects those who depend on others for help with activities of everyday life—including bathing, dressing, and taking medicine. People who are frail may appear to be easy victims.

You may see signs of abuse or neglect when you visit an older person at home or in an eldercare facility. You may notice the person:

- Has trouble sleeping
- Seems depressed or confused
- Loses weight for no reason
- Displays signs of trauma, like rocking back and forth
- Acts agitated or violent
- Becomes withdrawn
- Stops taking part in activities he or she enjoys
- Has unexplained bruises, burns, or scars
- Looks messy, with unwashed hair or dirty clothes
- Develops bed sores or other preventable conditions

If you see signs of abuse, try talking with the older person to find out what's going on. For instance, the abuse may be from another resident and not from someone who works at the nursing home or assisted living facility. Most importantly, get help.

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FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY

1. The total weight of the bacteria in the human body is 2 kg.
2. Your right lung can take in more air than your left.
3. Not only human beings, but also koalas have unique finger prints.
4. At birth, a child's body is made up of around 300 bones. But an adult has just 206.
5. Every year more than 2 million left-handed people die because of mistakes they make when using machines designed for right-handed people.
6. If someone kisses another person for a certain amount of time, this is much more effective in terms of hygiene than using chewing gum, as it normalizes the level of acidity in your oral cavities.
7. An adult person performs around 23,000 inhalations and exhalations a day.
8. The total strength of masticatory muscles on one side of your jaw is equal to 195 kilograms.
9. Men are officially classified as dwarves if their height is below 1.3 m, whereas for women the measure is 1.2 m.
10. A person uses 17 muscles when they smile, and 43 when they frown.

ASK THE EXPERT

QUESTION:

Stephanie W. from Freehold asks: *"My nephew was recently in a car accident and is still in the hospital. He was originally in I.C.U. but is now in a regular room. The doctor said that he has a spinal cord injury, but it is still too early to determine how bad the injury is. I read your column every month and remember you saying something about the spinal cord affecting the brain. Could you give me an idea of what he could be facing here?"*

ANSWER:

Hi Stephanie! First off I want to tell you that I am so sorry for everything that you and your family are going through in regards to your nephew's accident! The fact that he was moved into a "regular room" from the Intensive Care Unit is promising news! Unfortunately, it's difficult to answer your question about what the road to recovery may look like for your nephew without the details of his condition (where in the spinal cord the injury is, how severe the injury is, etc.), however I'm happy to give you an overview of spinal cord injuries in hopes that it will help you and your family on this road to recovery.

The spinal cord is known in the neuro field as the "neurological superhighway of the nerves". It controls all nerve communication between the brain and the rest of the body, and is responsible for carrying out all functional capabilities sent from the brain. Think of the spinal cord as a bridge between the brain and the body. In the event of a spinal cord injury (like your nephew), changes in muscular and/or sensory functions may result. These changes may be temporary, however could also be permanent.

Muscular change possibilities will vary depending on the location of the injury. If, for example, the injury is to the lower part of the spinal cord (known as the sacral area and the lumbar area), the injured person may develop issues with their hips, legs, and possibly bowel and bladder issues. If, on the other hand, the injury is to the upper part of the spinal cord from the chest up through the neck (known as the thoracic and cervical areas), the injured person may have issues with their arms, chest or even breathing problems.

It is usually said that the higher in the spinal cord the injury, the worse the sensory and/or muscular issues may be. This may be a result of the injury being so close to the brain. In addition to the muscular issues mentioned above, a person may also experience sensory issues such as hand-eye coordination, balance problems, or ringing in their ears.


Most important to know here Stephanie is that early intervention is key. It is imperative that your nephew begin physical therapy and if necessary cognitive and/or speech therapy as soon as he is able to. Studies have shown that injured people who begin therapy immediately after the injury (once medically stable of course), have much higher recovery rates (such as partial or full function recovery, return to work abilities, and better quality of life) than those who waited a longer period before beginning therapy.

If I can be of any assistance to you through this process please feel free to either reach out to me via email at bgallo@allairehc.com, or even reach me on my cell phone at (732) 865-0767. I am happy to help however I can whether it be giving advice, taking your nephew into Allaire for rehabilitation, or simply lending an ear. Thank you so very much for reaching out to me with your question, and I hope that I will get the chance to do another article in the (hopefully) near future about how amazing your nephew is doing!!!!



Brie Gallo is the Director of Case Management and Physician Relations for Allaire Rehab and Nursing Center.

Please submit all questions to bgallo@allairehc.com

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How to Recognize Weight Loss in Seniors

It's important to be aware of weight loss in people with dementia and act immediately to help regain a healthy appetite and reduce the risk of malnutrition. The most common signs are:

- Bones visible under the skin
- Loose clothing
- Loose rings
- Loose fitting dentures
- Leaving food on the plate

A poor diet will increase the chances of illness and many other health conditions as well as lowering someone's quality of life. Eating a wide variety of foods regularly will ensure someone's dietary needs are met.

When challenged:

- Try whetting their appetite; any increase in activity can help instigate hunger as well as digestion, so a short walk or chair-based activity may help. Don't fill stomachs with excess fluids before mealtimes as this will blunt the appetite.
- Try and use simple food cues with mealtimes such as aroma of toast or coffee in the morning or familiar cooking noises, which may all help someone with dementia to understand that it's time to eat.
- Offer small portions of food if someone has a small appetite as too much can be off-putting.
- Understanding their likes and dislikes can make a difference at mealtimes. Try some new flavors, but not to the point that someone refuses food. Think about food occasions, which may trigger a memory and connection with that particular food.
- Taste and smell diminishes with age and more so with dementia so food preferences may change day-by-day.
- Be aware that someone may not remember when they last ate and this may cause reluctance to meals.
- It's important that someone with dementia is given the opportunity to feed themselves as this helps retain a sense of independence and dignity. As dementia progresses they may become less dexterous and lose the ability to use cutlery. They make adapted cutlery, cups with handles and non-slip placemats to make things easier. If cutlery becomes difficult to use then provide finger foods. A finger food diet can be just as nutritious and served hot or cold. Pizza slices, chopped vegetables, fruit and sandwiches are all good examples.
- Be patient; mealtimes could be lengthy and involve gentle encouragement as well as appropriate supervision to reduce any risks of choking.
- If someone is losing weight then you may need to consider fortifying foods to get as much nutrition as possible into a small serving of food, especially calories and protein. Full fat milk, cheese, oils, butter, mayonnaise, avocado and peanut butter are a few ideas of foods you can use.
- Dehydration is also common among older people with dementia. Dehydration can cause headaches, confusion, irritability and constipation, which can contribute to urinary tract infections. Older people who are incontinent need to drink more, not less, to encourage the bladder to empty regularly to prevent infection and to exercise the bladder muscles. We get some of our fluids from food, particularly foods such as soup, stews, fruits and vegetables, jelly, sauces, ice-lollies and yogurt. All drinks help us to remain hydrated, including tea, coffee, water, milk, fruit-teas and fruit juices. The color and smell of urine are good indications of whether people are getting enough to drink and are keeping hydrated, so keeping an eye on this will help.

It is always recommended to speak directly with a dietitian or medical doctor to help with suggestions and advice.

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AQUABOT POOL CLEANER

Every pool owner appreciates cutting out at least one annoying and time consuming chore. That's why so many people appreciate robotic pool cleaners like the Aquabot Classic. Check out our review of this classic pool cleaner.

This excellent investment for inground pools is great for any skill level. It uses active scrubbing brushes to thoroughly clean the floor, walls, waterline, and stairs. Included in this machine is:

- A power supply
- Cleaner attached to a 50-foot floating power cable
- Filter bag with flotation and intake extensions

This plug-and-play equipment is ideal for anyone who doesn't want to put in a lot of time or effort to pool cleaning. And let's face it, who does? Here are some simple tips to using it:

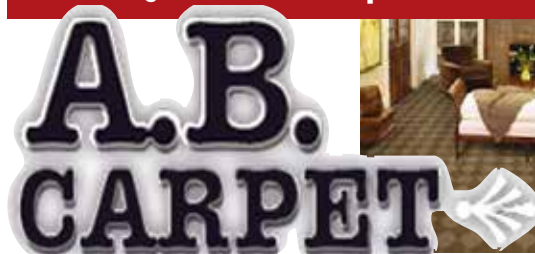
- Put the filter bag inside the cleaner.
- Plug the power supply into a GFCI outlet.
- Insert the floating power cable from the cleaner into the power supply.
- Situate the cleaner in the shallow end of the pool; the cleaner will slowly fall to the bottom.
- Switch on the power supply.
- Let the cleaner run.
- Shut it off when you want it to stop.
- Remove the cleaner from your pool.
- Allow any water to drain out.
- Remove filter baskets.
- Rinse with a high-pressure garden hose.



Not only is the Aquabot Classic easy to run, it's affordable compared with other models. It's also a long-lasting piece of equipment that should last you many years. In addition, it's very efficient at cleaning pools of all sizes, and it's super simple to set up and use. This self-contained unit is able to filter the water down to two microns.

If you're looking for an automatic cleaner that is efficient, fast, versatile and affordable, the Aquabot Classic is the one for you! Visit www.CentralJerseyPools.com for more info.

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TIPS FOR INCREASING YOUR HOME'S VALUE

By Brianna Siciliano

Whether you plan to sell your home now, in a few months, or in years to come, it is never a bad idea to make home improvements. When you are eventually ready to sell your home, you will not want it to be on the market for a long time. Instead you will want buyers to fall in love with your home, so in love that buyers feel like they just have to have your home!

A great way to begin the process of increasing your home's value is to make a plan. For some homeowners, checklists are the go-to home improvement planning guide. Start this plan slowly. Instead of rushing into mini-projects like repainting, replacing, and hiring a handyman, take the time to think of everything you wish to change and/or update. Don't worry about how long it will take, and don't think about how you will get it done. Just write everything down. While doing this, write down a guesstimate of how long you think you may want to live in the home you are currently living in. Be

realistic throughout this process. Once you have finished listing items and projects, list the time and money each item will need. Then prioritize the items and projects under two categories: "needs" versus "dreams." Try your best to come to a reasonable outcome. By the time your planning process is complete, you will know what projects you can accomplish with your budget and time-frame.

The next step to increasing your home value is to tackle one room at a time. It won't be pretty if you have a half-finished kitchen, a bedroom that needs fixing, and a basement that is a quarter of the way finished. By strategizing your projects and following a plan, you will find that more care is put into each project and each item on your checklist is done in a beautifully, well thought-out way.

Don't forget that curb appeal is important. You want future buyers to be intrigued by your home's exterior. Would you be excited to tour a home that has cracked windows and a messy landscape job? Probably not. Adding plants to accentuate the beautiful details that your home has, like a beautiful front yard or a nice walkway, is a great way to catch and hold people's eyes. A helpful way to see what needs improvement is to take a picture of your home's exterior in black and white. The photo effect will point out flaws in your home's structure that you can fix. You love your home, and you want the future owners of your home to love it too. Take care of it.



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GO FRAMELESS

NATURAL WEED KILLERS

By Stefanie Maglio

Weeds on your property, particularly in your landscaping, are often unsightly and a nuisance, especially when the weather gets warmer during spring. Unfortunately, weed killers often contain harsh chemicals that can be dangerous to breathe in or touch. There are safer ways to rid your property of weeds. For your family's health and the environment, consider these natural weed killers:

PULL THEM. Simple enough, and quite obvious, but it will get the job done. Just remember to pull from the root, or they will grow back. Also, try pulling them when the ground is wet from rain or watering. This will make the weeds come out of the ground easier.

POUR BOILING WATER ON THEM. This is a similar concept to pulling out the weeds while the ground is wet. Scalding hot water will shrivel even the toughest of weeds within a few days.

SMOTHER THEM. Cover low-growing weeds with newspaper to cut them off from sunlight. This will help prevent growth. This can be used as a prevention tactic before weeds grow as well.

SALT THEM. Stock up on leftover rock salt from the winter and sprinkle it in your garden during the springtime. Salt can make a good weed barrier and leave the ground barren for a prolonged period of time.

Make simple and cheap edging out of scraps and pressure-treated decking boards. Cut them into 8-inch "pikes" and hammer the pieces into the ground next to each other to form a continuous edge.

OUTNUMBER THEM. In gardens, there is competition for resources such as water, soil, and sunlight. Plant ground covers, flowers, and garden crops that will naturally beat out weeds for resources and nutrients.

Douse weeds with **VINEGAR** and they will shrivel up a few days later.

You can always learn to love them. Some weeds such as dandelions are not complete eyesores. Whatever you choose to do, avoid pesticides, as it is healthier for earth and your family.



TAKE PRECAUTIONS

When taking on any home improvement project, it is important to protect yourself from preventable injuries. Doing so involves understanding the risks associated with your specific project, as well as equipping yourself with the proper tools. Research shows that many Americans are seriously injured by home improvement accidents every year. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in 2013:

- More than 511,000 people were treated in hospitals, doctors' offices and emergency rooms for injuries related to ladder use;
- Approximately 301,425 people were injured from lawn mower-related injuries;
- Nearly 7,500 were treated for injuries related to power tools; and
- More than 569,000 injuries were related to sofas and couches, particularly in climbing them to clean hard-to-reach areas of the home.

Don't become a statistic. Follow the tips below for a safe home improvement project.

LADDER SAFETY

One of the most dangerous places around the home is on top of a ladder. Especially if you don't scale them very often, ladders can pose balance issues. And given the height you're dealing with, a fall can be very dangerous.

Always place ladders on a firm, level surface and always avoid wet ground.

Once you're on the ladder, avoid leaning too far to one side or reaching for items. This can throw off your balance and quickly shift the weight of the ladder.

Other tips:

- Never climb a ladder without someone nearby;
- Keep your ladder away from electrical wires, tree limbs or other obstructions; and
- Use a sturdy step ladder instead of furniture or a countertop to reach high areas.

GENERAL SAFETY

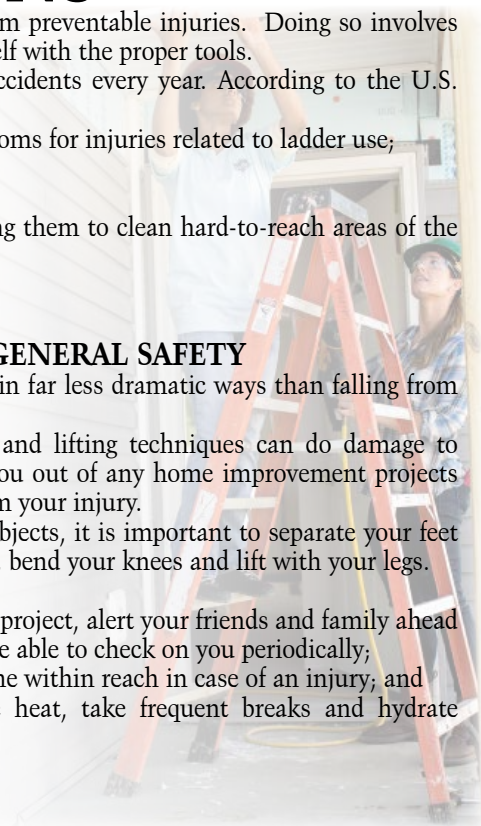
Many injuries occur in far less dramatic ways than falling from a ladder.

Improper stretching and lifting techniques can do damage to your back, keeping you out of any home improvement projects until you recover from your injury.

When lifting heavy objects, it is important to separate your feet shoulder-width apart, bend your knees and lift with your legs.

Other tips:

- If taking on a large project, alert your friends and family ahead of time so they will be able to check on you periodically;
- Always keep a phone within reach in case of an injury; and
- If working in the heat, take frequent breaks and hydrate properly.



AUGUST IS NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH

By Susan Heckler

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends getting 29 doses of 9 vaccines (plus a yearly flu shot after six months old) for kids aged 0 to six. No U.S. federal laws mandate vaccination, but all 50 states require certain vaccinations for children entering public schools. Most states offer medical and religious exemptions; and some states allow philosophical exemptions.

Vaccines do have some controversy; it is not our intention to advise whether or not you should get your immunizations, just to inform our readers of the recommendations.

Getting all the vaccines recommended by age 2 will help protect your child from diseases that can be dangerous or even deadly, including:

- Measles
- Whooping cough (pertussis)
- Chickenpox
- Hepatitis A and B

Doctors recommend that all pre-teens ages 11 and 12 get the following shots:

- Meningococcal vaccine- This shot protects against types of meningococcal disease, including meningitis. Meningitis is a very serious infection of the tissue around the brain and spinal cord.
- HPV shots- These shots protect against human papillomavirus (HPV), which can cause several types of cancer. The HPV vaccine is given as a series of shots over several months, starting at age 11 or 12.
- Tdap booster- This shot protects against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough (pertussis). It's a single shot that's given to pre-teens ages 11 or 12.
- Yearly flu shot- Getting the flu vaccine every year is the best way to protect against the flu.



As young parents, we stress and obsess about making sure our children are up to date on all of their vaccinations to be sure they have the best chance at wonderful health. Sometimes we forget that it doesn't end there. Vaccines protect not only you, but those around you too.

- Adults need to get vaccinated just like kids do. Make sure you are up to date on your shots. Even if you got all your shots as a child, you still need shots as an adult. The protection from some shots can wear off over time. Also, as you get older, you may be at risk for other illnesses, like shingles.
- An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and others from the flu.
- Get the Tdap shot to protect against tetanus diphtheria and whooping cough (pertussis). Everyone needs to get the Tdap shot once, and pregnant women need a dose during every pregnancy.
- After you get a Tdap shot, get a Td shot every 10 years to keep you protected against tetanus and diphtheria.
- Older adults (60+) need shots to protect against diseases like pneumonia and shingles.

There may be other shots needed depending on your lifestyle choice, profession, other diagnosis, travel plans etc. Always check with your doctor.

Under the Affordable Care Act, the health care reform law passed in 2010, most private insurance plans must cover recommended shots for adults. Depending on your insurance, you may be able to get your shots at no cost to you. Talk to your insurance company to learn more.





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BATTLING BUTTERFLIES WHEN GOING



Every one of us at one time or another has felt the back-to-school jitters when preparing to start a new school year. No matter what age or grade they are, kids always will feel stressed about how many notebooks to buy, what teachers they will have, how to make new friends during the year, and more.

As a parent, all you hope for your is for your child to succeed in the upcoming school year and for them to find a way to calm their nerves before entering a new year. You play a key role in your child maintaining a healthy, happy mindset, so here are some ways to put their nerves to rest.

First, make sure your child is taking care of the basics. Make sure they are eating right and are on a good sleeping schedule, since anxiety often causes children to not focus on these things.

About a week before school, have your child start getting on a set routine, much like the way it will be once school starts.

Next, talk to your child about their fears, and assure them that it's okay to be nervous. Be open with your child and let them know that they can come to you for advice.

For when the first day is almost here, try and motivate your child by maybe planning out their first day outfit or getting their supplies ready. The first day of a new year can be daunting, but with your help, your child will be able to have a great year!

Can the Tooth Fairy Save Lives?

By Susan Heckler

Children start losing their teeth between the ages of 5 and 7. There is a time-honored tradition of placing your child's lost teeth under their pillow to wait for the tooth fairy. Mom and/or Dad sneaks in and slips some money under their kids' pillow to celebrate this new stage of life. Many parents save the teeth as a keepsake. Some even keep the teeth of their dogs (guilty)!

As it turns out, a study in 2003 by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research showed that baby teeth are a rich source of stem cells, somewhere between one and two dozen. These can be grown into multiple kinds of cells if needed. Later in life, these cells can be what a child needs as replacement tissue for whatever reason. This can potentially save lives and provide needed treatment.

Baby teeth banking has become another option for families. For the past 20 years, thousands of dollars have gone toward banking newborn cord blood stems cells. They've done in the hopes of treating serious illnesses for close family members, or those emerging as the baby grows.

There is one big difference if the tooth is to be used medically, the baby teeth must be kept fresh. Stem cells degrade and lose their potency over time, therefore reducing their effectiveness for treatment. It may be wise to allow a dentist to handle the tooth to ensure proper treatment. Storage facilities have opened for housing samples while scientists conduct additional research for the potential use of baby teeth's stem cells. As soon as baby teeth fall out, laboratories have created kits to aid in their preservation for future use.

There are services out there to properly preserve the teeth for future use. The teeth are placed in a liquid nitrogen cryopreservation vault, where the stem cells will continue to be undamaged and usable for years.

Don't let this take the fun out of playing Tooth Fairy. Your child never needs to know! Be the loving parent, do your winged fairy deed and put the tooth away for less happy days.



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When a Baby Cries

BABIES ARE FRAGILE!

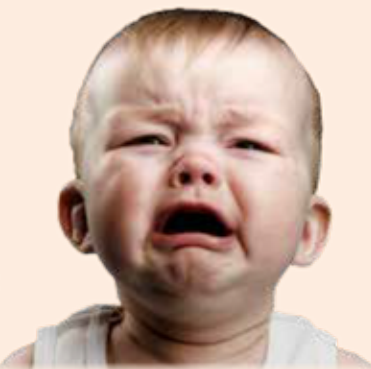
It's normal for babies to cry, even when you are trying to comfort them. Some babies cry more than others or for longer periods of time. This is normal too. It is also normal for a caregiver to become frustrated. No matter how stressed, tired, angry or frustrated you feel, you must never, ever shake a baby. Shaking a baby can kill or cause serious injuries.

The message is simple: NEVER SHAKE A BABY

HOW TO COPE WITH A CRYING BABY

- Make sure the baby's basic needs (food, diapering, appropriate clothing, etc.) are met.
- Try swaddling, tightly wrapping your baby in a blanket for warmth and security.
- Offer the baby a pacifier.
- Lower the lights and noise to help calm the baby.
- Walk the baby around holding him or her close to you.
- Take the baby for a ride in a stroller or a car.
- Call a friend, relative, neighbor or medical provider for help.
- Take a break - sit down and count to 10 or 20.
- If all else fails, put the baby in the crib on his or her back. Close the door and check back every five minutes or so. Don't pick up the baby until you feel calm.

If you are a child care provider and cannot handle a crying baby, please let the parent know. Remember, a baby will outgrow crying, but shaking a baby may cause permanent damage.



SHAKING A BABY IS DANGEROUS

Shaken Baby Syndrome is a serious brain injury that occurs when a frustrated caregiver "shakes" an infant, usually to stop him/her from crying. It is considered a form of child abuse.

Some parents, siblings, or caretakers who would not consider hitting a baby, think that shaking a baby is okay. THIS IS DANGEROUS!

Shaking a baby can cause bleeding inside the brain which may lead to:

- Death
- Brain damage
- Retardation
- Blindness
- Paralysis
- Seizures
- Developmental delays

Protect our future by handling infants with the loving care they deserve!

And remember, some play activities also can be dangerous, such as:

- Vigorous, repeated tossing of a baby into the air
- Jogging while carrying an infant on the back or shoulders
- Bouncing an infant on an adult's knee or swinging the baby on an adult's leg
- Swinging the baby around by the ankles
- Spinning an infant around

SYMPTOMS OF SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME

- Constant crying
- Stiffness
- Sleeping more than usual
- Unable to wake up
- Seizures
- Dilated pupils
- Decreased appetite
- Vomiting
- Difficulty breathing
- Blood spots in eyes

If for any reason the baby has an injury, take him/her to the nearest hospital emergency room or call 911. The baby will not get better without receiving medical treatment.

GETTING HELP

IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU CAN'T COPE, HELP IS ONLY A TELEPHONE CALL AWAY.

If you are feeling stressed, call the Family Helpline:

1 800-THE KIDS, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week



THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS WARNS AGAINST JUICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

They warn it has plenty of sugar, which can cause obesity as well as cause blood sugar to skyrocket.

Even older children should avoid concentrate juices where possible. They say that fruit juice is dangerous for children under one year old, health officials have declared.

A new policy published in May by the American Academy of Pediatrics warned parents about the previous policy said that children aged six months to six years could have up to six ounces a day of fruit juice.

Since that policy was published in 2006, however, there has been a swell of medical research into fruit juice as a driver of obesity rates and risks for dental care.

In the new recommendations, AAP researchers urge pediatricians to tell parents to mash up fresh fruit for their children, instead of giving them juice. Water and milk should be their main - if not only - liquid for young children.

Writing an accompanying commentary, Dr Steven Abrams, incoming chair of the AAP Committee on Nutrition, says parents should feel comfortable with feeding limited amounts of 100 percent fruit juice to their older children.

But, he strongly discourages consumption of unpasteurized juice.

'The policy clarifies that there is virtually no role for juice during the first year of life and that expensive juice products designed specifically for infants are not of value,' Dr Abrams writes.

'These recommendations, taken together, represent a policy goal of decreasing juice consumption, especially in small children, while ensuring an adequate intake of whole fruits.

'It balances the role of a small amount of 100 percent fruit juice in meeting these intake goals while limiting the exposure to juice and emphasizing the key roles of water and milk in a healthy diet.

'It recognizes that juice may provide some vitamins — such as vitamin C in orange juice and calcium and vitamin D in some fortified juice products — but lacks the fiber and protein critical for the growth of children.'

He adds: 'When juice is served to older toddlers, it is important that it not be sipped throughout the day or used to calm an upset child. It is not useful for the management of diarrhea illnesses and may predispose infants or young children to the development of hyponatremia.'



THE ART OF IGNORING A PUBLIC TANTRUM

The public tantrum: An unbridled ball of emotional anguish combined with screaming, rolling, pounding and whatever other displays of discontent your child prefers to use.

We have all experienced it. If not, we have witnessed it first-hand. Public tantrums are hardest to deal with because there is no corner or room you can send them to cool down. There are also people watching, judging and commenting. You may feel shame, embarrassment or the urge to have a meltdown yourself. Before you do, remember that you are not alone. Those on-looking parents probably aren't judging you at all. They are probably empathetic toward your situation and just happy that it isn't happening to them. So keep your emotions in check and follow these steps to temper the tantrum.

SIMPLY LEAVE

Sometimes the best option for controlling a full-blown public tantrum is simply heading back to your car. When combined with a straightforward explanation of why you are leaving, this tactic can draw a line of what is



acceptable and not acceptable in public. If followed through, your child can learn from the experience and may think twice before acting the same way next time.

COOL-DOWN SPOT

Even though you don't have access to your child's room or usual discipline spot, you can usually still find a quiet place to reason with your tantrum-thrower. Seek out the restroom, dressing room or parking lot and let your child cool down. Explain the consequences of another tantrum and stick to it.

KEEP YOUR HEAD

Remember, your child is still trying to learn the rules of life. He or she is likely testing the boundaries or crying out for extra attention and is just unsure of how to do so. Keep your calm and just know that you are not the first parent to experience the public tantrum. Screaming at your child in public will only bring more attention to the situation.

Christine Taliercio, M.S.,C.A., L.ac., D.ac. Acupuncture Works LLC



Christine Taliercio, M.S.,C.A., L.ac., D.ac. is a certified acupuncturist, licensed in NJ by the Board of Medical Examiners, a certified Diplomate in Acupuncture by the N.C.C.A.O.M., and the owner of Acupuncture Works LLC. Taliercio is trained in treating infertility, smoking, anxiety, and depression.

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Dr. Helen Simigiannis, MD, FACOG Antheia Gynecology



Dr. Helen Simigiannis received her undergraduate degree in the Biological Sciences at Rutgers University in 1993. In 1999, she received her M.D. from Ross University School of Medicine. After finishing two years of training in Family Medicine, she went on to complete her OBGYN residency with her last year as Chief Resident at Creighton University Medical Center in 2005. She has been in private practice since. In 2010, she pursued her goal of starting Antheia Gynecology. Her goal here is to focus on menopausal, adolescent and adult gynecology, minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery, and office-based minor gynecologic procedures.

Dr. Simigiannis speaking about lifetime gynecologic health: "You have babies for one segment of your life," she says. "For the rest of it, you want an attentive caring doctor to look after your gynecologic health." - As quoted in NJ Monthly Magazine Oct 2010.

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Dr. Steven Linker, OD Monmouth Vision Associates



Dr. Steven Linker graduated from SUNY State College of Optometry in 1984 following a degree in Biochemistry from SUNY Binghamton.

He is currently a member of the New Jersey Society of Optometric Physicians and the American Optometric Association. Monmouth Vision offers Comprehensive eye exams for children and adults, Corneal Mapping, Digital Retinal Imaging, Dry eye treatment, eye emergencies, Glaucoma testing, Low Vision treatment, Macular Degeneration Treatment, Sports and Specialty eyewear fitting and Visual field testing. His office has an on site selection of eyeglasses and sunglasses for every age and every budget.

In addition to running his busy private practice, Dr. Linker is a consultant in several nursing homes and assisted living facilities and involved in his community.

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Grigory Goldberg, MD, FAAOS Advanced Orthopedics and Sports Medicine Institute (AOSMI)



Grigory Goldberg M.D. is a fellowship trained Orthopedic Surgeon specializing in Spine surgery. Dr. Goldberg received his B.A. with honors from the New York University, and his medical degree at the State University of New York Medical School. Dr. Goldberg completed his internship and residency at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, in Philadelphia and finished his training in Spine Surgery with the prestigious Leatherman Spine Institute.

Dr. Goldberg has interest in all aspects of spine surgery including degenerative diseases of the cervical and lumbar spine, tumors, fractures, infections and scoliosis. He has had extensive experience in the field of Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery and Motion Preserving Spine Surgery and treats all aspects of spine problems including degenerative diseases of the neck and back, sciatica pain, arm pain, scoliosis, tumors, and revision of back and neck.

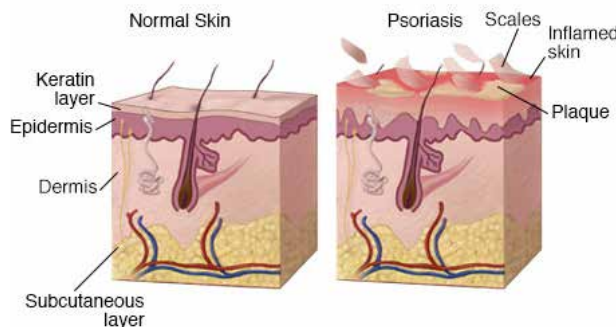
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AUGUST IS *PSORIASIS* AWARENESS MONTH

By Susan Heckler

Psoriasis is a common skin condition that changes the life cycle of skin cells, causing them to build up rapidly on the skin's surface. The condition is a chronic one, with persistent and sometimes painful symptoms. Psoriasis is an autoimmune disease that causes raised, red, scaly patches to appear on the skin. It typically affects the outside of the elbows, knees or scalp, though it can appear on any location. It is known to cause itching burning and stinging sensations.



Psoriasis is not contagious but may run in families. About one-third is traceable to family history. The malady seems to affect men and women equally, and Caucasians have almost twice the likelihood as African-Americans.

Its occurrence can range from mild cases with small areas of rash to larger, more inflamed areas of raised red areas. Symptoms can oftentimes go into remission, even without treatment, and then return without notice.

Psoriasis is associated with other serious health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and depression so it is not something to ignore. What you may attribute to an annoying rash may have underlying complications.

More than 7.5 million Americans have psoriasis, according to research by the National Psoriasis Foundation.

TREATING PSORIASIS

A doctor can diagnose psoriasis by studying the patches on the skin, scalp or nails. Most cases are mild in terms of symptoms and require common skin care.

In terms of dealing with the condition, the National Psoriasis Foundation recommends a balanced diet to be fit and maintain a healthy weight. Avoiding certain foods may help ease psoriasis symptoms. This may require some trial and error throughout your life, so be sure to log what you've eaten following a particularly notable flare-up.

In treating psoriasis, the primary goal is to stop the cells from growing so quickly. Treatment cannot fully cure psoriasis, but there are many options that can provide significant relief.

Some of the most basic forms include:

- Common skin creams or lotions
- Baths or soaks to keep the skin hydrated
- Aloe Vera
- Non-prescription cortisone cream
- Exposing skin to small amounts of natural sunlight





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Dr. Sanjay Gandhi, DPM

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Happier Feet

By Susan Heckler

I have noticed that if my feet are not happy, the rest of me is miserable. Blisters, bunions, rubbed raw, pinched...when you are on your feet all day it happens. No matter how expensive the shoe and how well it fits, time and gravity takes its toll.

Our poor feet are encased in shoes for terribly long stretches of time; they often become strained, blistered, and pained.

Got new shoes and no time to break them in? Try to apply heat to them with a blow dryer, to loosen them up. The material will be more pliable when you slip your feet in.

If the shoe fits but your toes are a bit squished, place them straight in the freezer. Fill two small Ziploc bags with water, and seal them tightly. Tuck the bags inside the shoes, specifically in the boxy part where your toes go, and let them sit overnight in the freezer, until the water in the bags freezes. The freezing water will slowly expand the bag to gently stretch the walls of your shoes. Let the ice melt for about 20 minutes before removing the bags.

Rubbing sandpaper on the bottoms of new shoes will improve the grip and better traction.

Did those shoes rub the last time you wore them? Apply clear gel deodorant to the areas in the shoe that are most likely to cause friction with your skin to act as a lubricant.

Does wearing heels cramp your toes? Try applying tape to your second and third (or third and fourth toes) to lessen the pressure on the ball of your foot. Medical tape or Scotch tape works.

Wet feet are no fun so waterproof your canvas shoes with beeswax. Cover the entire surface of your shoes with beeswax, and then use the heat from a blow dryer to warm it and press the substance into the shoes.

Read this too late and have blisters? Try dabbing apple cider vinegar on your feet or rubbing Aloe vera gel to relieve the inflammation and redness. Soak your feet in black or green tea, which have amazing anti-inflammatory properties.



BLOOD LEAD TEST SAFETY ALERT

Today the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are warning Americans that certain lead tests manufactured by Magellan Diagnostics may provide inaccurate results for some children and adults in the United States. The CDC recommends that parents of children younger than six years (72 months) of age and currently pregnant women and nursing mothers at the time of this alert who have been tested for lead exposure consult a health care provider about whether they should be retested.

"The FDA is deeply concerned by this situation and is warning laboratories and health care professionals that they should not use any Magellan Diagnostics' lead tests with blood drawn from a vein," said Jeffrey Shuren, M.D., J.D., director of the FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health. "The agency is aggressively investigating this complicated issue to determine the cause of the inaccurate results and working with the CDC and other public health partners to address the problem as quickly as possible."

The FDA's warning is based on currently available data that indicate Magellan lead tests, when performed on blood drawn from a vein, may provide results that are lower than the actual level of lead in the blood. This includes all four of Magellan Diagnostics' lead testing systems: LeadCare, Lead Care II, LeadCare Plus, and LeadCare Ultra. At this time, all LeadCare systems can be used with blood from a finger or heel stick, including the LeadCare II system - a system found in many doctors' offices and clinics. In addition, some laboratories offer other methods of lead testing, which are not believed to be affected at this time.

The CDC is recommending that health care providers retest children younger than six years (72 months) of age at the time of this alert (May 17, 2017) if their test was conducted using blood drawn from a vein using any Magellan Diagnostics' LeadCare System tests and received a result of less than 10 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$). The CDC also recommends that women who are currently pregnant or nursing and were tested in this manner while pregnant or nursing get retested. Other adults who are concerned about their risk or the risk to an older child should speak to their health care provider about whether they should be retested.

"We understand that parents of children and others affected by this problem will be concerned about what this means for their health," said Dr. Patrick Breyse, PhD, CIH, director of CDC's National Center for Environmental Health. "While most children likely received an accurate test result, it is important to identify those whose exposure was missed, or underestimated, so that they can receive proper care. For this reason, because every child's health is important, the CDC recommends that those at greatest risk be retested."

The FDA currently believes this issue with inaccurate results first appeared in 2014 and is issuing this warning now based on a lack of reliable data identifying the cause of the problem, the frequency and extent of inaccuracies, and concerns surrounding the effectiveness of mitigations taken by the company to date.

Lead exposure can affect nearly every system in the body, produces no obvious symptoms, and frequently goes unrecognized, potentially leading to serious health issues. Lead poisoning is particularly dangerous to infants and young children. While recommendations for lead screening differ from state to state, all states require children to be screened for lead exposure. Some adults are also at risk for lead exposure, including those who work around products or materials that contain lead.



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DON'T LET ASTHMA KEEP YOU OUT OF THE GAME

Today, more than ever, asthma is not a barrier to physical activity. In fact, if you keep your asthma under control, you can do it all! Need proof? Well, did you know that.....

- At the 1984 summer Olympics, 67 of the 597 American athletes had asthma. Among them, they won 41 medals.
- Twenty percent of the athletes at the 1996 summer Olympics had asthma brought on by physical activity.
- Almost 30% of the American swimmers on the 2000 summer Olympic team had asthma and used inhalers.
- Asthma didn't hold them back, and it shouldn't hold you back, either!



Asthma — which makes it hard to breathe, and causes coughing and wheezing — affects about **FIVE MILLION American kids and teens! That's almost 1 in 10!**

WHO HAS ASTHMA?

Famous people like rapper Coolio have asthma, although he's better known for his hit songs like "Gangsta's Paradise" than for his fight against the illness. Olympians like Misty Hyman and Amy VanDyken, Tom Dolan and Karen Furneaux, and Kurt Grote also have asthma.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY > ASTHMA?

Things like cold or dry air, dust, pollen, pollution, cigarette smoke, or stress can "trigger" asthma. This can make your body pump out chemicals that close off your airways, making it hard for air to get into to your lungs, and causing an asthma attack.

Physical activity can trigger asthma attacks too. Experts don't know for sure why physical activity sometimes brings one on, but they suspect that fast breathing through the mouth (like happens when you get winded) can irritate the airways. In addition, when air pollution levels are high, physical activity in the afternoon is harder on the lungs than morning activity — pollution levels rise later in the day.

GET FIT

So, should you get a doctor's note and skip gym class? Sorry, no. Doctors want their asthma patients to get active, especially in asthma-friendly activities like these: swimming, bicycling, golf, inline skating, and weightlifting.

Why are these good choices if you want to be physically active?

- They let you control how hard and fast you breathe
- They let you breathe through your nose at all times
- They don't dry out your airways
- They mix short, intense activities with long endurance workouts
- You can do them in a controlled environment (for example, a gym with air that's not too cold or dry)
- Usually you do them with other people, who can help you if an attack comes on
- Getting regular physical activity can improve your breathing, and lead to fewer asthma attacks. Just remember to follow these tips. (In fact, this is good advice for everyone, not just those with asthma.)
- Ease into it.
- Start your workout with a warm-up, and don't overdo it by running five miles on your first day if you get winded walking around the block! Finish up with a cool-down.
- Take a buddy.
- It's more fun and a friend can help if you get into trouble.
- Respect your bod.
- Stay away from the things that trigger your asthma. Help out your airways by breathing through your nose instead of your mouth. Take it easy on days when your asthma symptoms are really bugging you. And stick to the medicine routine that your doctor has set up.
- Take breaks. Treat yourself to rest and drink plenty of water.
- Mix it up. For example, try going inline skating one day and taking a long walk the next.
- Feel Good. To feel your best, do the right stuff to control your asthma. And listen to your doctors — they're on your team!



According to Dr. Stephen Redd, an asthma expert at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people with asthma "should expect to live a life that really isn't affected by asthma, except for having to follow the directions." He also says to speak up if you are having symptoms, and remember to "keep a good attitude and keep working to control the disease."

So, get out there and get moving! With good habits and today's medicines, you can go for the gold — or just join your friends on the basketball court, in the pool, on the dance floor...

HOPE AFTER STROKE: 75-YEAR-OLD PATIENT DEFIES ODDS

According to the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association, stroke claims a life every four minutes in the U.S.



Despite this sobering statistic, there are success stories – like that of Janis Blackburn of Annandale, NJ.

Janis, a 75-year-old retiree, works part time at a department store. One day, while recovering from a hip fracture, her body suddenly went limp. Unable to move, she was rushed to the emergency room and then transferred by helicopter to Overlook Medical Center.

Janis arrived in a coma and on a breathing machine. Immediately, a blood clot in her brain that had caused a massive stroke was emergently removed by Dr. Paul Saphier, a board-certified neurosurgeon at Atlantic NeuroSurgical Specialists (ANS) who specializes in endovascular neurosurgery.

“Janis was rushed to the interventional neuroradiology suite for an emergency procedure similar to cardiac catheterization but for the brain,” he explains. We discovered she was suffering a stroke from a blockage in one of the most important blood vessels, the basilar artery. This condition has a reported 99% chance of death.”

Using very thin wires, catheters and a special device called a “stent retriever,” the blood clot was removed, and complete blood flow was restored to her brain. Within a few days, Janis was back to her pre-stroke self.

Janis shares, “Today, my mind is as sharp as it was before. Dr. Saphier saved my life.”

Atlantic NeuroSurgical Specialists (ANS) is New Jersey’s largest neurosurgical practice and one of the most advanced in the country. Since its founding in 1958, ANS has specialized in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders affecting the nervous system.



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Reiki and the Health of our Family Pets

By Jeffrey Carpenter

When looking at the benefits of Reiki, people usually highlight the major improvements they experience. Stiffness and pain are relieved and sometimes eliminated. Anxiety and stress are reduced to help provide calmness and relaxation. However, few people realize that all of these benefits can be shared with the family pets. Reiki is a soothing therapy that applies healing energy on many levels, including the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. It is used to help relieve the symptoms of many different kinds of ailments, including everything from pulled muscles and arthritis to major diseases like cancer. Reiki complements most medical therapies, speeding up the healing process after surgery and reducing the side effects of medications and treatments. So why not share the benefits of Reiki with our beloved furry, feathered, and scaled family members? Animals love the stress relief of Reiki energy flowing through them. They demonstrate a calm and relaxed demeanor, even around strangers coming into their homes. Outdoor animals like horses, cows, and sheep also benefit from Reiki, as it promotes calm and reduces the possibility of injury from restless behavior like pacing and digging. Separation anxiety, aggression, and even marking can be addressed by adding Reiki to a behavioral training program. On the physical level, animals experience the same benefits as people, like reductions in pain and swelling as well as healing for infections and diseases. The use of Reiki on animals has shown impressive results in a wide variety of illnesses, from treating nausea, gum disease, and bladder infections to reducing the size of cancer nodules. Add Reiki to your wellness plans for your entire family, including your pets!

UNDERSTANDING GOUT

"Almost every household in America is affected in some way by diseases of the bones, joints, muscles, and skin," says Dr. Stephen I. Katz, director of National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS). These disorders affect people of all ages, racial and ethnic populations, and economic levels.

Gout is a form of arthritis that causes joint pain. It happens when uric acid, a bodily waste, deposits as needle-like crystals in your joints. The crystals cause swelling, redness, heat, pain, and stiffness.

In many people, gout first affects the joints of the big toe (a condition called podagra). Other spots can include the insteps, ankles, heels, knees, wrists, fingers, and elbows. Chalky uric acid deposits, called tophi, can also appear as lumps under the skin surrounding the joints and rims of the ear and also can cause kidney stones.

To find out more visit www.Medlineplus.gov. Type in "gout" in the search box. Also, consult your physician to answer your questions and to get a proper examination



What Are the Four Stages of Gout?

Asymptomatic (without symptoms) hyperuricemia—Elevated levels of uric acid in the blood (called hyperuricemia) but no other symptoms. This does not need treatment.

Acute Gouty Arthritis --Uric acid crystals build up in joints, causing sudden, intense pain, swelling and sometimes warmth and tenderness. Attacks are common at night and can be triggered by stress, alcohol or drugs, or the presence of another illness. Eating too many high-purine foods, such as liver, dried peas and beans, gravies and anchovies can produce uric acid crystals and increase the risk of gout. Even without treatment, such flare-ups (or bouts) usually subside within 10 days. They may not happen again for months or even years. But over time they may last longer and occur more frequently.

Interval or Inter-critical Gout- The period between acute attacks, with no symptoms.

Chronic Gout- The most disabling stage. It usually develops over a period of 10 years. The affected joints and sometimes the kidneys may have been permanently damaged. With proper treatment, most people do not progress to this stage.

AUGUST IS NATIONAL BREAST FEEDING MONTH: *The Pregnancy Project*



When it comes to eating for health, it's important to make food choices that are backed by robust scientific evidence, packed with essential nutrients, and that can help to prevent us from getting sick. For infants, one food that meets all these requirements is breast milk.

During National Breastfeeding Month, we are excited to highlight the Birth to 24 Months and Pregnancy Project, which aims to advance the knowledge base on what is known about the impact of how we feed our babies and health. Breast milk is an important subject in this review.

At the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), we're passionate about the work we do each day to help all Americans reach their highest standard of health. One of our major initiatives – the Dietary Guidelines for Americans – has been the Nation's go-to source for science based nutrition advice for over 30 years. ODPHP partners with the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop each edition of the Dietary Guidelines, which is published every 5 years.

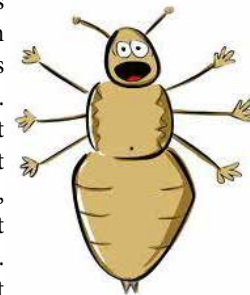
To date, the Dietary Guidelines has provided nutrition guidance for adults and children ages 2 years and older due to the unique nutritional needs, eating patterns, and developmental stages of children from birth to 2 years (24 months) that pose challenges to creating population nutrition advice with adequate scientific evidence. Similarly, pregnant and breastfeeding moms have distinct needs that have been addressed in the Dietary Guidelines, however, not with a comprehensive focus.

To ensure that future editions of the Dietary Guidelines include guidance for Americans of all ages and life stages, ODPHP and CNPP have undertaken the Birth to 24 Months and Pregnancy Project to begin a review of the evidence on nutrition and health for these groups. Congress also enacted a law requiring these groups be included in the 2020 Dietary Guidelines. This initiative will follow a rigorous evidence-based process informed by a broad range of experts in the field of nutrition and health of young children and women who are pregnant, including pediatrics, psychology, and economics.

Beginning with the ninth edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, expected in 2020, this policy will be expanded to address the needs of infants and toddlers (from birth to age 2 years), as well as women who are pregnant. This critical expansion of the Dietary Guidelines will help ensure that the path to healthy eating starts as early as possible in life.

HISTORY OF HEAD LICE

Head lice have been around possibly as long as humans. Lice are mentioned in the Bible. There is evidence of nit combs in ancient tombs containing lice and nits. Medusa is believed to be an image of what someone looked like when they were not treated for head lice. Before modern times, there were ancient remedies or people just picked and combed out lice and their nits. Early in the 20th century, if you had a lot of money you hired a nitpicker.



Throughout history, many treatments for head lice were developed, including toxic powders not suitable for humans. During the early 1900's kerosene oil was used, which was soon followed by warnings of fire. The military started shaving heads in World War II to control lice outbreaks. Lice have been around possibly since Adam & Eve, so if you play the blame game we can blame it all on them.

LICE FACTS 101

- A louse is one bug, lice are plural. Nits are the lice eggs. Sometimes nits are referred to as hatched nits but we refer to the nits as viable eggs.
- Lice are wingless bugs that range in size from as small as a pencil point to the size of a small ant (2mm to 4mm).
- Lice and nits can range in color from tan to dark brown.
- Lice do not jump or fly, they just crawl. Lice have 6 legs with claws at the end designed to cling to the hair shaft and they are masters at hiding.
- An adult female louse can lay 3-5 waterproof, hard to remove nits two times a day.
- Lice do not live on our pets.
- Lice do not burrow and they must be on a human head in order to survive.
- Nits, once removed from the head, are harmless.

HOW YOU GET HEAD LICE

- More than 90% of head lice cases stem from head to head contact with an infected person (hair touching hair)
- Hugs (don't give up hugging, just perform regular combing head checks)
- Children working together in small spaces where heads touch (books/hand held video games)
- Cloth seats in the movie theater, on a bus, train, or plane
- Sharing dress up clothes, hats or hooded sweatshirts
- Lying on someone's bed/pillow
- Sharing brushes or hair accessories
- Using someone's towel
- Trying on clothes or hats in stores

****Less than 10% of head lice cases are from the environment**

INTERMITTENT FASTING- IS IT FOR YOU?

By Susan Heckler

Wouldn't it be great if you could eat what you want most of the time and still lose weight?

Science suggests it is a probability, in fact, it may very well be one of the most effective tools available to lose weight. This super weapon is called intermittent fasting. One study documents overweight adults who cut calories by 20% every other day dropped 8% of their body weight within 8 weeks. As an added bonus, they also had less inflammation. Fasting places your cells under a slight stress. The process of responding to this stress, according to scientists, strengthens cells' ability to deal with stress and potentially fight off some diseases. Additionally, this type of diet may limit symptoms of asthma and improve cholesterol levels.

The logic behind it all? Fasting allows your body to burn off excess body fat. Body fat is stored food energy which your body will simply "eat" its own fat for energy if no other food source is introduced. Why cut back every day if you could watch what you eat only a few of days a week? It's great when you are stuck at a weight-loss plateau despite sticking to your weight loss program or just to speed up your weight loss. There are several variations on the theme. The most popular option is fasting for 16 hours which is easy to do on a low carb, high fiber diet, especially since it includes sleep time. Essentially you are trading breakfast for a non-caloric fluid and having lunch as the first meal of the day. Fasting from 8 pm to 12 noon would be your 16 hours of fasting, thus they call this the 18:8 method. You can do this daily or as often as you wish.



Other plans encourage you to skip food entirely for up to 24 or 36 hours at a time. The longer fasting periods are harder to do but more effective. Skipping meals dinner to dinner once or twice a week can be easy to do (for some people).

Twice a week you can eat calorie-restricted (500 calories per day for women, 600 calories for men) then eat as much as you need to feel satisfied 5 days of the week. It is called the 5:2 diet and is effective if you don't mind calorie counting. For many, it's not easy to skip most of your calories a few days a week and rely mostly on water, coffee, and tea to be satiated.

Is this for everyone? No, this diet is not recommended for children, pregnant women, those with eating disorders or diabetes. As with any change, check with your doctor, especially if you are on medication or being treated for disease or illness.

HAPPY LEFT HANDED PERSON DAY, AUGUST 13!

By Susan Heckler

Back in my mother's childhood (1940's), kids were discouraged from being left handed. Her teachers went so far as to tie her right hand behind her back during penmanship lessons.

While no exact set of "left handed genes" have been discovered, people who dominantly use their left hands do have more left-handed family members.

Life is easier for lefties than it used to be, more gizmos and gadgets have been invented and produced for their use. They may still struggle with even simple tasks for that very reason.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The word left came from an old Anglo-Saxon word (lyft). It means weak or broken.
- Up to 10% of the population are lefties.
- Close to 30 million people in the U.S. are left-handed.
- We've been dominantly using our right hooks for more than 500,000 years.
- Mothers over 40 are twice as likely to have a left-handed baby.
- Lefties are 3 times more likely to be an alcoholic.
- They mostly use the right side of the brain.
- They are late bloomers – reaching puberty 4-5 months later than others.
- People with psychosis had a 20 percent likelihood of being left-handed.
- 8 Presidents were lefties- James A. Garfield, Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama
- They're better at divergent thinking.
- Lefties who graduate college tend to become 26% richer than right-handed people.
- Lefties are typically better at architecture and math. (Right-handed people tend to be better and verbal skills).
- 25% of the Apollo astronauts were left-handed.
- Lefties are more likely to suffer from asthma and allergies.
- There are a few members of the royal family who were lefties, including, the queen's mother, Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Charles and Prince William.
- Lefties are more likely to have insomnia.
- Lefties can see better underwater.
- The right hand is mentioned positively 100 times in the Bible, while the left hand is mentioned only 25 times, all negatively.
- 50% of CATS are left handed.



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DEFINING LOAN TYPES FOR MORTGAGES

By Mia Ingui



When it comes to buying a home, there are so many things to take into consideration, making it one of the most difficult yet most important decisions of your life. Besides considering the look of the home and if it is the right fit for you, there is one other very important aspect to think about: the price. It is imperative to know and

understand the types of mortgages and mortgage loans that are out there and to select the one that will work best for you in the long run.

There are two basic types of mortgages:

The Fixed Rate Mortgage:

These mortgage loans have one fixed interest rate for the entire term. It will never change. The monthly payment that you will make remains consistent every week, month, and year. These are the most popular loans, making up 75% percent of all of home loans, and they usually come in terms of 10, 15, or 30 years.

The Adjustable Rate Mortgage:

These mortgage loans have adjustable interest rates that vary and change from time to time based on a specific schedule.

Of course, there are pros and cons to each mortgage loan. Once you weigh the pros and cons of each type, it will be easy to decide which is right to go with.

Fixed Rate Mortgages:

PROS: You have security in knowing that your interest will always remain the same. This works best for those who plan to live in their homes for a long time and keep the same mortgage for many years.

CONS: These can be much more expensive than starting off with an ARM. Plus, when rates fall, the only way to take advantage of them is to refinance, which could be a lengthy process requiring thousands of dollars.

Adjustable Rate Mortgages:

PROS: This offers a lower rate to those who do not plan on staying where they are for long. The interest rate will change at pre-determined points in time over the course of the loan. There is a cap, though, to how much the rate can fluctuate when it does change. You will get a lower interest rate in the initial phase of home ownership.

CONS: It is unpredictable, since although you know when the rate will change, you never know by how much it will change, and it may not pay off to take this risk in the end.



HEART HEALTHY DIET SPOTLIGHT: THE NUT

Unless allergic, everyone has a favorite nut. Almonds, cashews, peanuts and every nut in between each has its own distinct flavor.

While enjoyed by many people, new research shows that nut consumption is not nearly high enough when considering the positive impact nuts can have on the heart.

Nutrition experts recommend the inclusion of nuts in a heart-healthy diet, but a new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that about 60 percent of Americans don't consume these foods on a daily basis.

The study, released in December 2014 and conducted in 2009 through 2010, highlights a major gap in the American diet that could be doing more harm than we realize.

The ideal level of consumption is about an ounce-and-a-half of nuts – equal to about 240 calories – according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration guidelines on reducing heart disease.

The CDC study reveals that only about 14 percent of men and 12 percent of women reached that level of consumption.

THE POWER OF NUTS

Because nuts are high in protein, small portions can be eaten as a replacement for other protein foods. Adequate consumption of nuts has been linked, the CDC reports, to decreased obesity, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome and diabetes.

For the purpose of the study, the CDC definition of nuts included everything from peanuts, peanut butter and cashews to pumpkin seeds and sesame paste, among many others.

SNACK VERSATILITY

The best part about adding nuts to your regular diet is how easy and convenient it is to do so. From cashews to almonds, nuts are easy to pack and require no cooking. Throw some nuts into smoothies or salads, and watch the flavors come alive.

Nuts also are great for on-the-go snacking. You can fill up a sandwich bag with your favorite variety of nuts and dried fruit for a nutritious, heart-healthy boost.



ARE YOU A HEALTH NUT? HAVE A PISTACHIO!

By: Erin Mumby

Did you know that pistachios are one of the healthiest nuts? Pistachios have vitamins, minerals, and fats that will help improve your health. They are a great source of calcium, iron and copper! Pistachios have a high content of oleic acids and antioxidants like vitamins A & E. Pistachios are less fat than other kinds of nut like Pecans and Macadamia nuts. Pistachios are high in protein. They help to control your appetite. Their high amount of protein keep you energized throughout the day. Pistachios make you full and are perfect for managing weight.

Pistachios are good for your blood! A healthy heart is just one great benefit. The monounsaturated fatty acids found in the nuts help to lower high blood pressure. Pistachios are also known to help lower lipids and lipoproteins in the blood. This helps, which ultimately helps to lower bad cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol. Good cholesterol reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

They can also help to fight against diabetes! One cup of pistachios contains 60% of your daily-required phosphorus. Phosphorus works to break down proteins into amino acids, which helps to improve glucose tolerance.

Pistachios are known to improved digestion. They help with promoting the growth of probiotics in the digestive tract. They help with constipation. Pistachios are full of dietary fiber and nutrients. Our guts need the bacteria that pistachios provide to stay healthy.

Pistachios are available in all different forms. However, raw, unsalted pistachios are the ones that are the most nutritional. They should be in their natural color without any added food dyes. It is recommended to buy nuts that are in their natural form because they will be the least processed. Pistachios should be stored in airtight container. If this container is stored in a cool, dry place, the pistachios will be enjoyable for many months!

Pistachios are great for your skin. Vitamin E is present in pistachios. Vitamin E is great for protecting the skin from aging. Vitamin E also can help protect skin from UV rays, which will make sure that your skin isn't damaged in the sun. Raw pistachios can also benefit dry skin. The fatty acids in pistachios help to give your skin a glowing complexion. Pistachio oil is also great for the skin! Pistachio oil is used as a moisturizer to relieve dry skin. It is often found in massage and aromatherapy oils!

Consider adding a handful of these healthy nuts into your diet! Throw some in a green salad! You could also use some pistachios to make a delicious trail mix. Add some pistachios, basil, and olive for a unique pesto sauce. Grind some pistachios up and add them into a smoothie. These nuts are great on their own too! However you serve them, pistachios are a great new addition to your diet.



HERE'S A FRESH IDEA

Look to locally grown organic produce for health and flavor

A great trend is happening in local farms all over the United States. More and more people are becoming preoccupied with the notion that eating organic foods is better for them.

Now there is clear evidence that eating organic produce is better for you than produce that is farmed using chemical pesticides and other insecticides that significantly reduce the amount of nutrients that can be derived from the produce.

HARSH EFFECTS

A recent study conducted by Princeton University concluded that “pesticides used in growing common crops such as fruit, corn, cotton, soybeans, and tobacco have been found to have high toxicity to birds, mammals, and fish. Pesticide use kills not only pests, but also their natural enemies, many of which are now endangered due to ingested toxins and loss of food.”

We, as human beings, are ingesting the same food as these animals. If they are harming the natural wildlife that severely, what are they doing to us?

The Food Quality Protection Act, which was drafted in 1996, states that most of the chemicals that are used in pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides “present unacceptably high health risks, particularly to infants and children.” The fact of the matter is that no longer is it just relegated to the fruits and vegetables that are grown in America’s Heartland. Chemicals also affect the meat and dairy products that we consume because more farmers are feeding their cattle steroids and growth hormone, something that is believed to be safe — but also controversial.

Consuming foods and beverages that come directly from animals that are raised without the use of these hormones is thought to be safer to the overall health and well-being of the population. There are questions about whether the steroids and hormones can be harmful to humans once ingested, and while the debate over hormones is far from settled, organic meats can eliminate worries about it.

CONSIDER ORGANIC

Organic produce allows consumers to enjoy all of the natural vitamins, minerals, and other natural benefits that pesticide-free farming can bring about.

A recent consumer survey completed by students and researchers at Cornell University found that “organically grown apples were less tart at harvest and sweeter after six months of storage than conventional apples.” This fact only accentuates the fact that there can be benefits to taste as well as health when you buy organically grown produce.

Another startling fact to note is what diseases you could prevent yourself from getting if you were to eat only organic foods. A battery of tests by the U.S. Department of Agriculture has found that pesticides have led to cancer, obesity, birth defects, and Alzheimer’s Disease. When you consider the amount of produce that is eaten in one year, chances are that most Americans have already ingested trace amounts of dangerous pesticides.

What do we know definitively about the advantages of a diet rich in organic produce? The University of California- Davis recently found that organic tomatoes that are grown in fields without the use of chemical fertilizers have “excessive formation of antioxidants such as uercetin (79% higher) and kaempferol (97% higher)” than tomatoes grown using chemicals and insecticides.

LOOK LOCALLY

As the United States grows ever more health conscious, it is clear that something needs to be done about the non-organic produce being grown in the United States. There are many advantages to eating organic produce that is grown by local farms.

What people need to concern themselves with is having a better knowledge of what they are ingesting because it could eventually be a life-or-death situation. There are too many diseases that can be recognized from ingesting non-organic produce for everyone not to stand up and take notice.

In order to protect from the possible dangerous effects of hormones, steroids and pesticides, it is important that everyone stays informed about what their local farmer is using to grow their crops.

The situation becomes difficult when you talk about getting the vitamins and nutrients that your body needs by not eating fruits and vegetables regularly.

If you can, try to find a local farm in your area that grows everything organically, so you can recognize the health benefits of organic food while not concerning yourself with harmful carcinogens.



It's Blueberry Season in New Jersey!

By Susan Heckler

Pick them yourself locally, buy fresh from the farm stand or favorite grocery. So why would you freeze fresh blueberries?

Berries are very good for our overall health. The vitamins contained spread a number of benefits throughout our body, but is it possible to make them even healthier?

Research shows that freezing fruits can actually make them even healthier. With organic blueberries, anthocyanin concentration is actually more potent after a short stay in the freezer. Anthocyanins contain a number of anti-inflammatory qualities and are beneficial to your overall brain health. They may also possess anti-carcinogenic properties. The berries actually have their deep blue color because of the anthocyanin in the tissue.

Apparently, when blueberries are frozen for any period of time, the low temperatures penetrate deep within the fruit and disrupt the tissue structure – this makes the anthocyanins more available and absorbable.

1. Lower your risk of heart disease

The nutrients regulate and relax the elasticity of your arteries in the vascular wall, keeping them from getting damaged. This means improves your blood flow thus a healthy blood pressure in the process.

2. Reduced Risk of Forms of Dementia

The anthocyanin in the berries can actually increase your memory functions and shield your brain against cell damage and loss. The berries can also improve your nerve cell growth, and make communication easier between nerve cell processes, slowing the aging of cells.

3. Better Nervous System Health

The antioxidants in blueberries offer nerve cells protection from various forms of toxin pollution.

4. Enhanced Motor Function

Above the age of 70+ years, people perform and behave more functionally after consuming frozen blueberries with heightened cognitive ability and improved motor ability.

5. Better Digestion

The antioxidants in blueberries protect your digestive tract from any damage from outside sources.

A BOUNTY OF BLUEBERRIES

By Ally Tringali

Blueberries are one of summer's greatest offerings. They add a hint of sweetness to your breakfast smoothies, cereals, and desserts, and make a perfect, healthy snack. So what's the best way to have a constant supply of the freshest blueberries in your home? Grow them yourself!

In order to grow the best blueberry bush with the greatest bounty, check out these tips!

- 1. Do your research:** Do some research to see what kind of blueberry bush grows best for your area's climate. Some bushes grow better in direct sun with humidity, while others can withstand those random early summer freezes.
- 2. Soil counts:** Believe it or not, soil has measurable acidity levels that can effect what grows in your area. The Almanac recommends that the best acidity level is between a 4 and a 5, but if your soil doesn't fit the standard level, then you can always plant your bushes in pots. To learn two great ways to test your soil acidity, check out this website.
- 3. Chasing the sun:** In addition to having good soil, your blueberry bush needs to get the correct amount of sunlight. Search for an area that gets a lot of sunlight, or plant your bush in a pot so you can move it around during the day to get the most direct sun.
- 4. They need space:** HGTV recommends leaving at least five feet between each blueberry bush when planting. If you want to plant your bush in a pot, choose one that is 18 inches to give them enough space to grow.
- 5. Stay hydrated:** Blueberry bushes are easy to care for: they only need one to two inches of water per week.
- 6. Safety first:** We aren't the only ones that love blueberries! If not protected, blueberries can be picked off by hungry birds or other animals, or eaten by bugs. HGTV recommends protecting them with a net or bamboo sticks.
- 7. Constant supply:** According to The Almanac, blueberry bushes can live and provide fruit for years...up to 20, to be exact! To make sure that your bush is living its life to the fullest, prune your bushes every couple of years. But beware! Bushes won't provide fruit the same year that they are pruned, so alternate your pruning years between bushes.



IT'S EASY BEING GREEN

By Alexandra Tringali



Avocados are quickly becoming a staple ingredient in American households. They're loaded with vitamins and nutrients, and their creamy, yet mild flavor allows them to be the perfect addition to almost any recipe, whether it's brownies, shakes, on toast, or even on their own, with a sprinkle of salt and pepper. However, as soon as you cut into an avocado, the vibrant fruit will begin to brown.

Why does this happen to fruits like apples and avocados? It's because of the reaction between the phenols and oxygen, from an enzyme called polyphenol oxidase (PPO.) Once the phenols are hit with oxygen, PPO oxidizes them, forming long chains of polymers called polyphenols. These turn any fruit with phenols brown. While the brown flesh is still edible, it may have a bitter taste to it, and the longer the fruit is exposed to air, the more bacteria can grow on it.

However, with the right tips and tricks, you can delay this process and extend your avocado's shelf life.

Chopped Onions

The first and most effective method of maintaining an avocado's freshness and vibrancy is to store it with chopped onions. While this means you probably shouldn't add this avocado to brownie or milkshake recipes, chopped onions help extend your avocado's shelf life due to sulfur dioxide. (Try adding both the avocado and onions to scrambled eggs instead!) When cut, an onion releases sulfur dioxide, which inhibits polyphenol oxidase and stops the fruit from browning. Storing an avocado with chopped onions extends its refrigerator life for up to five days.

Low Temperatures

The lower the temperature an avocado is stored in, the better. Storing an avocado at 5° Celsius (around 41° Fahrenheit) extends the shelf life of an avocado to five days. This is because colder temperatures slow down the polyphenol oxidase activity.

Acidic Juices

Every elementary school science class included an experiment with putting lemon juice on apples to see if the apples will turn brown. This is because acidic juices, like that from lemons or limes, inhibit polyphenol oxidase. Lemons and limes are rich in ascorbic acid (vitamin C) and citric acid, which keep avocados fresh and green for up to two days.

Basic Storage Techniques

Tricks like storing an avocado with onions or lemon juice can limit the amount of uses an avocado has, because it can very easily take on the powerful flavors it's stored with. By tightly wrapping an avocado in plastic wrap or storing it in an airtight container and placing it in the refrigerator, you can avoid browning for up to a day.

NOT YOUR AVERAGE GUACAMOLE

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 ripe avocados
- 3 tbsp pomegranate seeds
- 2 tbsp cilantro, chopped
- ¼ of a red onion, diced
- Juice from 1 lime
- ¼ tsp smoked paprika
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ¼ tsp chipotle
- Generous pinches of salt & black pepper



DIRECTIONS:

1. Slice the avocados in half and remove the pit.
2. Squeeze the fruit into a large bowl and mash with a fork, or use a mortar and pestle.
3. Mix the cilantro, onion, paprika, peppers, chipotle, and salt in with the avocados until well distributed.
4. Squeeze the lime juice over the mix and gently stir in the pomegranate seeds.
5. Serve with salty chips!

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THE 3 BEST HIGH FAT FOODS

By Brianna Siciliano

After cutting out different food groups for various periods of times, we have all (hopefully) learned that we need every food group in our diet, including fats too! Fatty foods help us absorb fat-soluble vitamins, keep us fuller for a longer time frame, and even help our hearts stay healthy (depending on the type of fat, of course. Cookie dough doesn't do much help to our hearts!) There are many high-fat foods available, but which three are the best to eat? Avocados, olive oil, and nuts!

AVOCADOS are one of the healthiest fatty-foods in the world, giving our bodies approximately 23 grams of fat, tons of fiber, and great antioxidants (including lutein, which is an antioxidant that protects our vision). Since avocados are filled with fat, it may not be in your best interest to consume the entire avocado in one sitting.

Instead, have some avocado with your breakfast (for example spread a little bit on your toast or mix some in with your vegetable omelet), lunch, and dinner (replace bad fats like mayonnaise with avocado spread).



Another source of healthy fat is **NUTS**, specifically pistachios, almonds, and walnuts. These nuts are all rich in a vitamin or mineral of some sort.



Almonds, for instance, are filled with vitamin E, walnuts with plant-based omega-3 fatty acid, and pistachios with lutein and zeaxanthin (important for eye health). If you are trying to decide which of these nuts is best to keep

stocked in your house snack wise, pistachios are the way to go! While a serving of almonds is anywhere from 14 to 23 almonds, and a serving of walnuts is 14 walnut halves, a serving of pistachios is 49 of the delicious nuts.

OLIVE OIL is another great choice when looking for the best high-fat foods. Known to reduce the risk of heart disease, lower blood pressure, and reduce the risk of certain cancers, olive oil should be your go-to oil. You can use oil when cooking and sautéing foods, to substitute sauce or butter when making pasta, or to replace salad dressings. Just be sure to use olive oil, like avocados and nuts, sparingly. You don't want too many calories or too much fat in your everyday diet!



Grilled Summer Squash with Shallots

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 large green & yellow squash
- 2 large shallots
- 3 tbsp. hot chili pepper olive oil
- 1 tsp. red pepper flakes
- Small handful of basil, roughly chopped
- 4 tbsp. Meyer Lemon Honey
- 1 ½ tbsp sherry vinegar
- Juice from half of a lemon
- Generous amounts of salt & black pepper



DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine oil and pepper flakes in a small sauté pan over medium heat until fragrant. Let cool.
2. Slice squash into thick wedges, preferably 2 by 1 inch squares. Place in a large bowl with whole shallots.
3. Pour the pepper and olive oil mixture into a small bowl with vinegar, honey, basil, and some salt and pepper, and mix well.
4. Pour oil mixture over the vegetables and let marinate for at least 30 minutes, but up to an hour.
5. Light a grill, and place each squash wedge and both shallots on the grill, rotating every so often. Reserve the marinade in the same bowl.
6. Remove the shallots after 5 minutes, and chop into thick slices. Place in marinade.
7. After a total of 10 minutes, remove the squash pieces and return to the marinade bowl. Add another pinch of salt and pepper, and mix well.
8. Plate and serve, either hot, room temperature, or cold.

Blueberry Crostata from the Kitchen of Ally Tingali

INGREDIENTS:

Dough:

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup pastry flour
- 1 tsp granulated sugar
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 6 tbsp cold butter, diced
- 2 tbsp ice water

Filling:

- 3 cups fresh blueberries
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- Juice and zest from 1 lemon
- 1 large egg, beaten
- Sparkling sugar



DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine the flour, sugar, salt, and butter in a food processor until the butter is distributed throughout the flour in small chunks.
2. While the machine is running, slowly add the water, one tablespoon a time, until the dough forms a ball.
3. Turn the dough out onto a very lightly-floured surface and gently knead into a disk. Wrap in plastic and freeze for at least an hour.
4. After an hour has passed, allow the dough to soften slightly on a rimmed baking sheet.
5. Gently press the dough out into a large disk, keep the middle thicker than the ends. Place in the refrigerator for 20 minutes.
6. Combine the blueberries, sugar, lemon juice and zest in a bowl until evenly coated.
7. Preheat the oven to 425° F.
8. After 20 minutes, gently pile the blueberries in the center of the dough, and fold the edges over the blueberries. Brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with sugar.
9. Bake for 22 to 25 minutes, until the blueberries bubble and the crust is golden.
10. Let cool for at least 20 minutes before serving.

DO CATS GET LONELY?

By: Ryan Lennox



Cats are animals mostly known for their independence, but just like humans, could even the most introverted cats get lonely? Scientists think that they can.

Pam Johnson-Bennett is a cat behavior consultant who has done a lot of research on whether cats get lonely, and apparently cats can get very lonely. Most loneliness stems from the owners taking frequent vacations, having long days at work, or even breaking their normal daily routine. Johnson-Bennett says that cats can show loneliness in a few ways, and none of them are particularly good for their health. "Changes in behavior, appetite, litterbox habits, or grooming could be signs that a cat is having trouble with too much time spent alone."

Dr. Carlo Siracusa, director of Animal Behavior Services at Penn Vet's Ryan Hospital, agrees with Johnson-Bennett's opinion. "If cats don't have the possibility to share spaces, proximity and time with their preferred buddies, they will get lonely." What this means is that if your cat is not exactly a social butterfly, then you are probably its friends. Therefore, spending too much time out of the house and away from the cat could make it quite upset.

When cats are left alone too long, they might start to act out of character. Their actions could range from tearing up furniture, to even using your bed and shoes as a litterbox out of spite. Cats can even become quite antisocial if left alone for too long.

Combating boredom is a task that can be easily accomplished if you are with your cat often, but becomes more of a challenge if you are frequently out of the house. For cats that are alone frequently, they often have to entertain themselves when they are not sleeping the day away. Simply leaving the television or radio on for them could give some ambient noise during the day, and can also help to control the anxiety animals have while left alone. Fun toys like cat towers, trees, and plush toys can not only entertain while you are home, but if left in an accessible location, can entertain your feline companion while you are out at work as well. However, nothing really beats sitting down and spending time with your cat if it seems to be lonely.

If you have exhausted all options when it comes to toys, then the best option to combat your cat's boredom could be introducing another cat to the family. While cats and other felines are often alone in nature, they do enjoy having a companion, just like many other animals. If this option just does not fit your lifestyle, then spending some more time around the house and home with the cat could be the best option.

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IS YOUR PET A CHUBBY BUBBY?

By Susan Heckler

Is Sweetie too meaty? Is Rufus rotund? Is your Pug a pudge?

Is your Himalayan just laying around?

An Estimated 59% of Cats and 54% of Dogs in the U.S. are Overweight or Obese.

Not sure? 22% of dog owners and 15% of cat owners said their pet's weight was normal when it was actually overweight or obese. Your pet is considered overweight if any of these physical indicators are present: ***excess fat covering the ribs, lack of waistline, pendulous abdominal fat.***

As in humans, dogs and cats carrying extra weight places extra demands on virtually all the organs of their bodies. Disease, a shortened life, and sometimes death are the consequences. Obesity problems include heat intolerance, decreased stamina, reproductive problems, osteoarthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, breathing problems, ligament injuries, kidney disease, many types of cancer and decreased life expectancy (up to 2.5 years).

Understand that this may mean you may have 2 1/2 years less time to love your best friend for something easily preventable!!



EASY REMEDIES WE CAN ALL FOLLOW:

PUPPY PORTION CONTROL: Keep track of how much you are feeding by using a measuring cup.

Establish a Schedule: If possible, offer meals on a set schedule. If you must free-feed, put a rationed portion down and don't refill until the next day.

LIMIT BETWEEN-MEAL SNACKS: Manage how many extra goodies the dog is getting. If they chew it and swallow it, they may wear it.

CHOOSE LOW-CALORIE TREATS: Store-bought treats and chews can be fattening. Some dogs will be just as happy with fruits, like bananas, carrots, or apple slices. Check to be sure the fruits and vegetables you share with them are safe for animals. Just because you have a large sized pet doesn't mean they HAVE to have the larger biscuits.

GET MOVING! Swimming is low-impact and can build muscles and burn calories without hurting joints. Walking, also low-impact and has the added benefit of getting both of you out of the house and into the fresh air. Fetch is fun!

If your baby is a house pet, check out the nutritional needs for what is considered a lightly active adult:

Cats	
10 lbs.	180 to 200 calories*
Dogs	
10 lbs.	200 to 275 calories*
20 lbs.	325 to 400 calories*
50 lbs.	700 to 900 calories*

Compare this to the caloric intake of humans:

Male	2500 Calories
Female	2000 Calories

Financial Health Checkup

Financial Health is a term used to describe the state of your personal financial situation.

Someone with good financial health deals well with their finances, makes their payments on time, and knows how to manage their money. They also sleep really well at night because of it.

Someone in poor financial health usually owes a lot of money and isn't making their payments on time. They toss and turn a lot and wake up exhausted.

Your Financial Health plays a role in your physical and mental health. If your finances are a mess with loose ends all over, then your mind cannot be at rest and your body experiences tremendous stress.

There are many dimensions and areas of focus that must be met and analyzed in regards to painting a healthy financial plan and flow of your money. Think about your answers to these questions. If you are not comfortable with them, you need to take action to protect your wealth and your family's future before a crisis comes. Planning ahead reduces your stress greatly and allows you to make smart decisions without the crisis mode we fall into.

- ***Have you compared the difference in what you own and what you owe?***
- ***Are you properly insured?***
- ***Have you considered lifestyle inflation and changes-in-life events?***
- ***Are you mindful of the difference between needs and wants so you can make better spending choices?***
- ***How and where can you reduce or eliminate expenses?***
- ***How can you best save for future goals?***
- ***What is your plan for emergencies?***
- ***Do you have a Will, Power of Attorney, and an Estate Plan?***



HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE

By: Erin Mumby

It seems like everywhere you go, people are talking about the pros and cons of health insurance. Our health insurance is such an important part of our lives. Health insurance can get expensive, but it's necessary! Here are some ways to get the most out of your health insurance:

- A lot of health plans offer steep discounts on vision. LASIK surgery is usually heavily discounted through your healthcare provider. Designer sunglasses and eye glasses can even be free through certain vision plans. Vision plans also give you personalized service. Special discounts are usually given to federal employees, military personnel, and retirees.
- Some plans offer classes to keep you educated. Parenting classes and ways to cope with depression, diabetes, arthritis, and heart disease can be sometimes found through your healthcare provider. Programs for quitting tobacco use are also offered a lot. Many health plans have a lot of different tools to help you stop smoking. Coaches, hotlines, and support groups can all be found through some healthcare providers. A lot of health plans will also offer discounts on products like nicotine gum or patches to help you curb your smoking habit.
- Many plans have programs that help members keep their health in check. Some plans offer blood pressure, cholesterol, weight, height, and BMI screenings for free. Sometimes you can even get a health coach to help you meet health goals. Other important screenings are offered for free. These include important cancer screenings. You must absolutely get preventive screenings. Some plans even reward their members for being healthy. You could get extra money for exercising, eating right, or meeting goals.
- More insurers are starting to cover alternative medicine. This can include acupuncture, massage therapy, yoga, and Pilates. Some may offer free tai chi classes to fight stress. Some providers can even offer up personal trainers. Herbal medicines and supplements can sometimes be covered by your provider as well.
- Most insurers offer benefits for children and the family. Childbirth education classes can be offered. A lot of health care providers offer special care management for babies and their expectant mothers. Breast feeding classes and free pumps are offered to new moms. Discounts on child care and safety products are usually offered. These can include child proofing products, parenting books and videos, and educational books and videos for children.

Living a healthy lifestyle and keeping chronic diseases under control can help you to lower your health care costs. With the right tools from your health care provider, you can keep your health in check. Preventative care is key in ensuring a healthy lifestyle. Research your health plan and see what perks you can get to help you live your healthiest life!

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