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Various strategies that are vital for healthy eyes

Eyesight is easily taken for granted. But when something goes awry, the value of strong eyesight is crystal clear. Once diminished sight occurs, it is very difficult to get it back without serious intervention – if at all. That is why it is so vital to keep eyes healthy and functioning at their peak.

Eye care involves regular vision checkups but also includes other components. The following tips can keep most people on the path to healthy eyes.

- Eat for healthy vision. Various vitamins and minerals are needed for healthy eyes, especially those in leafy greens like kale, spinach and collard greens. Fatty fish like tuna and salmon also have been shown to help the eyes, according to the National Eye Institute. In addition, healthy eating can help people lose weight. Being overweight or obese increases the risk of diabetes, which contributes to vision problems.

- Say “yes” to a dilated eye exam. Many eye diseases have no early symptoms, so the only way to check for eye disease early is through a comprehensive dilated exam. Getting the eyes dilated is painless and fast. Specialized eye drops are used to dilate the eyes. Dilating the pupil enables the eye doctor to see inside of the eye to check for diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, and retinal problems. Dilation will last for a few hours, depending on the patient. Although uncomfortable for a little while (dilated pupils let in more light, causing squinting), it’s well worth

it to catch diseases early.

- Practice frequent hand-washing. Washing hands regularly helps to keep bacteria, dust and dirt out of the eyes should you touch your face. In addition to washing hands, avoid rubbing your eyes.

- Wear UV protection. Arizona Retinal Specialists indicates that exposure to ultraviolet radiation increases risk for age-related macular degeneration and may cause sunburn on the corneas or photokeratitis. UV-protected eyeglasses, sunglasses and contact lenses can help, as will using shade hats or visors.

- Wear eye protection. When participating in sports, using chemicals during science class or operating equipment like a leaf blower, wear the right protection to keep eyes safe.

- Give your eyes a rest. Eye doctors know that people spend a lot of time staring at screens during the day.



COURTESY PHOTO

HEALTHY EYES: Regular vision checkups can help keep most people on the path to healthy eyes and better eyesight.

Providing a rest is necessary. Follow the 20-20-20 rule, which translates to every 20 minutes, look about 20 feet

away for 20 seconds.

Protecting eyes is a simple yet often overlooked component of maintaining overall

health. Taking measures to keep the eyes safe is both easy and effective.

How to pair food with exercise

Food pairing is often discussed in terms of which wines best complement particular dishes. But pairing food with exercise merits consideration, as it can create the balance needed for overall health.

Food plays an important role in workouts, giving individuals the energy necessary to perform at their peak. Timing meals appropriately and knowing what to eat before or after a workout can make a difference.

Creatine benefits weight lifting

Creatine is an organic acid that is an important ingredient for short duration, high-intensity exercises, such as weight lifting. According to Kelly Pritchett, Ph.D., RDN, director of the nutrition graduate program and assistant professor of nutrition and exercise science at Central Washington University, foods rich in protein from meat, poultry and fish can help optimize stores of creatine. Creatine also may be found in foods and beverages targeted to athletes, like

protein shakes and snacks.

Pre-workout mixes include protein and carbohydrates

A snack or mini meal one to three hours before a workout is ideal so that digestive issues don't occur during a workout when the body directs more blood to muscles than digestion. Food pairings that include a high quality carbohydrate, like whole grain bread or oatmeal, with a protein source, such as peanut butter or milk, can be key. Blood sugar will stay steady with whole grain carbs, and the protein will help you to feel full and avoid overeating after a workout.

Glucose, glycogen and running

Distance running or other exercises that require endurance, such as skating or biking, require ample energy stores. Although low-carbohydrate diets are popular for people looking to lose weight, they're not ideal for people who engage in endurance sports and need carbohydrates for energy, states Johns Hopkins Medicine. Endurance athletes need

more carbs than those who aren't training. These activities use both glucose in the blood and glycogen, which is sugar stored in the liver and muscles. Eating plenty of healthy carbs helps bolster energy stores. Whole fruits and grains are good sources of carbohydrates.

Benefits of bananas

For those with limited time to grab a bite before a workout, bananas might be the perfect option. According to WebMD, bananas have easily digestible carbs that will not weigh you down. The potassium in bananas also may help prevent muscle cramps during and after workouts.

Power up with potatoes

Potatoes are whole foods, meaning they contain a balance of all the essential amino acids, despite being low in whole protein. They're also rich in vitamin B6, which is critical to protein metabolism, says Mark Anthony, Ph.D., adjunct professor of science and nutrition at St. Edwards University, Austin. Potatoes also contain the right mix of sodium and potassium to maintain an elec-



COURTESY PHOTO

FOOD PAIRING: Timing meals appropriately and knowing what to eat before or after a workout can make a difference on your body.

trolyte balance in the body.

Recover right

A mix of carbohydrates and lean proteins also is ideal for exercise recovery. Mix in good fats like avocado and olive oil. Carbs will help

replenish depleted levels of glycogen and high-quality protein will help build and repair muscle. Don't forget to drink plenty of fluids to replace what was lost while working out.

Food and exercise go hand

in hand. It's important to eat well to keep the body in top form.

How to use diet to combat age-related bodily changes that can affect your health

The human body is a marvel. How the body transforms over the course of an individual's life is one of its more remarkable qualities, and those changes never cease, even as individuals near retirement age.

The changes associated with aging include physical transformations but also more subtle shifts the naked eye cannot see. For example, metabolism slows as individuals grow older, and aging also can lead to a decrease in bone density and muscle mass. These changes affect how men and women at or nearing retirement age should approach their diets in recognition of the various ways their nutritional needs change at this point in their lives. Any modifications to a diet should first be discussed with a physician, but the following are some ways aging adults can use diet to combat age-related changes to their bodies.

- Prioritize protein. The authors of a 2010 study published in the journal Current Opinion in Nutrition and Metabolic Care recommended that older adults consume between 25 and

30 grams of protein with each meal. The researchers behind the study concluded that such consumption could limit inactivity-mediated losses of muscle mass and function.

- Overcome reduced production of vitamin D. WebMD notes that people over 65 typically experience a decrease in natural production of vitamin D. Vitamin D is not naturally found in many foods, so aging men and women may need to rely on supplementation to ensure their bodies get enough of it. Vitamin D helps with anti-inflammation, immune system support and muscle function, among other benefits. So it's vital that aging men and women find ways to get sufficient vitamin D.

- Consume ample dietary fiber. The National Resource Center on Nutrition & Aging notes that fiber plays an important role in the health of older adults. Fiber has been linked with heart health, healthy digestion, feeling full, and preventing constipation, which the online medical resource Healthline notes is a common health problem among the elderly. Though the NRCNA

notes that older adults need slightly less fiber than their younger counterparts, it's still a vital component of a nutritious diet. The feeling of fullness that fiber consumption can provide also is significant, as it can ensure adults who aren't burning as many calories as they used to aren't overeating in order to feel satisfied. That can make it easier for such adults to maintain a healthy weight.

- Monitor intake of vitamin B12. The NRCNA notes

that vitamin B12 is involved in a host of important functions in the body, including nerve function and the formation of red blood cells. Vitamin B12 is most easily found in animal products, which many aging men and women must largely avoid due to other health concerns. In such instances, men and women can discuss supplementation with their physicians as well as alternative food sources of B12, such as fortified cereals, salmon and other items.

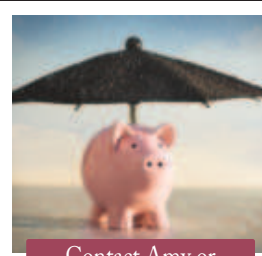
Bodily changes related to aging increase the likelihood that men and women will

need to alter their diets in order to maintain their overall health.

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Sticking to a diet while eating out

What to do when dining out is a challenge dieters know well. It's easy to control ingredients and portion sizes at home, but not nearly as easy when dining out.

Harvard Health Publishing says the average American eats out about five times a week, and that means figuring out how to stick to diets. Rest assured there are plenty of ways to socialize and enjoy meals away from home without compromising a diet.

- Do your research. Many establishments post their menus online and dieters can use that to their advantage. Prior to booking a reservation, review a restaurant's menu online to ensure there's something on there that won't compromise your diet. If you need further clarification, call the restaurant and see if substitutions can be made.

- Have a go-to dish. Many restaurants offer at least one

diet-friendly item like a Cobb salad. Dieters can choose a go-to healthy dish that won't compromise their meals and then look for it when dining out.

- Drink water. Don't drink your calories. Alcoholic beverages or sweetened soft drinks can be heavy in calories. Instead of using your calorie allotment on liquids, save these indulgences for food.

- Look for healthy cooking methods. Scan the menu for foods that are steamed, grilled, baked, and stir-fried. These cooking methods generally use very little oil or butter. Steer clear of heavy gravies or cream-based sauces as well. If there is a sauce, ask for it on the side.

- Choose the right food or

der. According to BodyBuilding.com, eat protein first, followed by vegetables, and leave carbohydrates for last. The protein and vegetables should slow down digestion, leaving you feeling fuller, faster. That means you'll be less likely to overindulge on bread, potatoes or a sugary dessert.

- Be forthright with dietary needs. Share with your server or party host what you can and cannot eat. Most establishments or individuals are happy to help customers stick to a particular diet. You're not being "a pain" or "picky" by being frank about what you need to eat to be healthy.

- Check out favorite dishes. You may not know what you're eating unless you investigate. U.S. federal law now requires all restaurants with more than 20 locations to provide nutritional information for menu items. Search CalorieKing for data on foods from hundreds of popular nationwide chains.



COURTESY PHOTO

DIET CHALLENGES: There are plenty of ways to socialize and enjoy meals away from home without compromising a diet.

- Snack before you leave home. Don't arrive at a restaurant feeling famished. Eat a small snack before leaving

home or bring a few safe items you can use as backups so you'll have something to eat if the menu does not

have much healthy fare.

Dieters can employ various strategies to stick to their diets while dining out.

Important reasons to visit a primary care physician

It is vital to make personal health a priority. Despite that widely accepted truth, far too often people delay trips to see their doctors. The coronavirus pandemic only compounded this issue. An April 2020 report from Modern Healthcare found roughly one in three Americans delayed medical care as they coped with the financial loss and stress caused by COVID-19. A report from CTV indicated Canadian cancer diagnoses were down 16 percent from 2018 to 2020 due to closed facilities or fear of getting COVID-19 from med-

ical offices.

Concerns about the pandemic are not the only reasons individuals may skip doctor visits. Some avoid going to the doctor due to fear of the unknown. Dr. Barbara Cox, a psychologist based in San Diego, told NBC News that it's common to feel reticent and anxious about going to the doctor. Around 3 percent of the population actually suffers from iatrophobia, the medical name for fear of doctors. Most just worry about getting bad news.

A refresher course on the benefits of visiting a primary

care doctor may compel millions to schedule appointments and get back on top of their overall health.

- Chronic disease management: An individual with a chronic disease, such as kidney disease, diabetes or hypertension, should consult with a doctor about the ideal frequency of visits and to coordinate medication and testing with specialists.

- Vaccines and shots: Primary care providers (PCPs) offer routine vaccinations and can ensure that individuals are up-to-date on the immunizations they need to stay safe. Tetanus, diphtheria,

shingles, pertussis, flu, and now COVID-19 vaccines are vital to overall health.

- Medical referrals: A PCP can assess a health situation and refer a patient to the correct specialist if more extensive care is needed. However, many chronic conditions can be monitored and addressed by a PCP.

- Cancer screenings: UW Medicine, which specializes in patient care, research and physician training in Seattle, says most people will need a few cancer screenings as they age, including colonoscopies, Pap smears, mammograms, and other important

diagnostic tests for cancer. PCPs are usually the first line of defense against cancer and can ensure patients receive the screenings they need.

- Non-life-threatening illnesses or injuries: Unless a situation is life-threatening or severe, thereby warranting a trip to the emergency room, most people can visit their PCPs for help treating a variety of conditions. When in doubt, individuals should first consult with their general practitioners about the right course of treatment.

- Routine lab work: Blood and urine tests often are part

of annual well visit checks. Many PCP offices have phlebotomists on staff so that lab work can be conducted in the convenience of one place and then sent out for testing.

- Work or sports physicals: Certain employers require physical examinations, as do schools and recreational sports leagues. PCP offices are the place to go for these types of examinations, which are generally recommended annually.

Primary care physicians are often the first people to turn to for a bevy of health and wellness needs.

Healthy activities for kids of all ages

Children have a seemingly endless supply of energy. Channeling that energy into something positive can benefit kids' minds and bodies.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends various amounts of daily physical activity for children depending on their ages and abilities. Adhering to these recommendations is especially important in the wake of what many public health officials fear has become an epidemic of childhood obesity in many nations. For example, the United States-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that roughly 13.7 million children between the ages of two and 19 are presently obese. In Canada, the Childhood Obesity Foundation reports that childhood obesity rates have hovered around 12 percent for years.

Routine physical activity can help children maintain healthy weights, and it also pays dividends for youngsters' mental health. According to the American Psychological Association,

children between the ages of six and 18 who exercise regularly tend to have lower levels of depression, stress and psychological distress. Those findings, part of a 2019 study published in the journal Sports Medicine, reflect the ways exercise affects the mind. And the mental benefits don't stop there, as the study also found that youngsters who are physically active also have higher levels of positive self-image, life satisfaction and psychological well-being.

The amount of physical activity children need each month depends on their age, and the AAP recommends the following age-based guidelines.

- Infants: The AAP recommends infants get at least 30 minutes of tummy time and other interactive play throughout the day.

- Toddlers: Toddlers can be tough to keep up with, and parents can channel that energy into something positive by ensuring their kids get at least three hours of physical activity every day. Free play outside and daily neighborhood walks are

some examples of appropriate physical activities for children in this age group.

- Preschoolers: Three-plus hours of physical activity, including one hour of moderate to vigorous exercise, is recommended for preschool-aged youngsters. Tumbling, throwing and catching are some of the activities recommended by the AAP.

- Elementary school students: School-aged children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week. The AAP recommends giving children in this age group ample opportunities for free play but also notes that organized sports focused on fun can be great outlets for kids in elementary school. Parents can speak with their children's pediatricians about appropriate muscle/bone strengthening activities, which the AAP recommends three days a week for kids in this age group.

- Middle school students: Students in this age group need the same amount and types of exercise that elementary school students need. But the AAP advises



COURTESY PHOTO

HEALTHY ACTIVITIES: Channeling children's energy into positive exercise and healthy activities can be beneficial for their minds and bodies.

parents to guide children toward physical activities that encourage socialization and to avoid having kids this age specialize in a single sport.

- Teenagers: Teenagers need an hour or more of physical activity most

days of the week. Muscle/bone strengthening activities should be included three days per week. Activities that encourage socialization and competition are beneficial to teenagers' development.

Physical activity can ben-

efit kids in myriad ways and should be a vital component of their daily lives.

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Occupational therapy care at Hillside Medical Lodge

BY ALEXANDRA MEELBUSCH

Hillside Medical Lodge has offered physical, speech and occupational therapy since its doors opened in 1978, and the need for those services has drastically increased over the last 10 years.

Part of that growth is due to the exceptional care by Jennifer Boyd, director of therapy, and her team of therapists. Boyd said, "I have been blessed through my 14 years here with therapists who support me to fulfill patients' outcomes by being compassionate, caring, and hardworking. I couldn't do anything without my staff."

Early on, Boyd knew the healthcare path was right for her – she just wasn't sure about what field. During her junior year of college, her grandfather became ill and was in the hospital. She became interested in what the

occupational therapist was doing for him. That is when she started her path down the road of occupational therapy.

Boyd studied at Texas Tech University obtaining her general studies degree, and later went to graduate from Texas Woman's University Houston where she earned her master's degree. Boyd's first internship was at Baylor Scott & White in Temple, and her second was in Michigan, where she passed her board exams.

Later, she moved back to Texas and started working for Home Healthcare, where

she would drive to four different counties to care for her patients. In 2008, Boyd started at Hillside Medical Lodge as an occupational therapist. She then became director of therapy around 2010 and has served her patients for over a decade.

Patient care is a main priority at Hillside Medical Lodge. That includes building relationships with patients, helping them to feel at home during their stay.

Boyd said, "I reach out to families of the patients to find out their likes and dislikes, that way we try to fit what they enjoy into our therapy to make it more pleasurable for them."

Home evaluations play a big role in Boyd's patient care as well. Depending on the patient's needs after checking out, she will evaluate their homes, making sure everything is safe and convenient for them to maneuver

around on their own without any complications.

It makes Boyd happy to know that what she does is very holistic, meaning when she provides care for her patients, she is also healing the mind, body and spirit to make her patients better in every way possible.

Especially when she sees a patient making the best of therapy. Her oldest patient was 108 years old. Boyd said she was walking down her unit and saw the 108-year-old, who was a retired ballerina, doing her version of a plié on the handrails. It warmed her heart.

Boyd stated, "We love seeing our therapy patients able to return home, we hold graduation celebrations for each one."

There are several success stories, but one of the most memorable was a six-time national roper. The roper couldn't walk when he ar-



COURTESY PHOTO

MEET THE TEAM: The Hillside Medical Lodge Rehabilitation team consists of (left to right): Cara Bradford SLP, Kathy Grant COTA, Jennifer Boyd Director of Therapy OTR, Eric Alexander PT, Mandy Myatt COTA, and Libia Sabras PTA.

rived but walked right out of the building during graduation. Hillside stated, "It is an honor to share these moments with each graduate of therapy."

Hillside Medical Lodge is

also well known for long-term care as well as short-term. For any questions or further information, you may call 254-865-7575.

When is the right time for kids to start volunteering?

Aristotle once said the essence of life is "to serve others and do good."

It's well documented that volunteerism offers many benefits to those who are recipients of the charitable work as well as the volunteers.

According to The Corporation for National & Community Service, one in four Americans volunteers. Volunteers come from all walks of life and various age groups. Nearly one-quarter of all volunteers are people under the age of 24.

Parents and guardians who want to introduce their children to volunteerism may not know when is the

right age to do so. Many experts agree that there isn't a definitive age for children to get involved in volunteering. In fact, no child is too young to volunteer. Joseph F. Hagan Jr., M.D., a clinical professor of pediatrics at Lerner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont, says helping out during the toddler and preschool years helps shape a child's sense of morality.

Rather than wondering if a child is too young to volunteer, adults should focus on finding the right activity to match the child's age. For example, a three- or four-year-old child can fill bags or boxes with donated food or help gather blankets and

towels to donate to an animal rescue. However, a toddler or preschooler may not have the stamina to complete a 5K walk.

Volunteerism doesn't even have to be in the traditional sense of working with an established charity. A youngster can pick flowers from a field and deliver them to an elderly neighbor. Or a preschooler can invite a child playing alone to come play together. A toddler who loves sorting items can help sort recycling items at home and watch a parent deliver them to the recycling center.

Another way to engage kids in volunteer work is to match their interests with the tasks. Many kids can't

get enough of animals, so they may want to help out an animal organization or be involved with a conservation group. A child can collect change to "adopt" an endangered species.

Kids also can visit a children's hospital and deliver gifts to youngsters battling illnesses. In such situations, kids may be more engaged if they can help kids their own ages.

Children are never too young to volunteer. Finding the right fit can inspire a lifetime of giving back that benefits youngsters throughout their lives.



COURTESY PHOTO

VOLUNTEERISM: Many experts agree that there isn't a definitive age for children to get involved in volunteering. In fact, no child is too young to volunteer.



COURTESY PHOTO

GIVING BACK: Volunteering in local organizations can not only help your community but can also improve your overall well-being.

Find the right volunteer opportunity for you

Giving back to one's community can provide a sense of purpose and improve an individual's overall well-being. Data from Volunteer Hub indicates that people who volunteer improve their health by strengthening their bodies, improving their moods and reducing stress. Volunteerism also produces additional benefits, including boosting one's positive perception to others. A study from CareerBuilder found 60 percent of hiring managers see volunteerism as a valuable asset when making recruitment decisions. Furthermore, human resources executives attest that contributing to a nonprofit can improve leadership skills.

By understanding the value behind volunteer work – for the people or organization on the receiving end as well as the volunteer – more individuals may decide to donate their time and services.

However, finding the right volunteer opportunity may take some trial and error. The following are some tips for finding the right fit.

- Consider skills and interests. Before choosing a volunteer opportunity, make a list of activities that you enjoy. This may help guide volunteer choices. For example, if you like hiking, you may volunteer to clean up a local park.

- Assess your skill levels. Is there something you are particularly adept at doing? For example, if you are a certified public accountant, you may be able to volunteer by mentoring young accounting students, or doing taxes or bookkeeping tasks for the elderly or less fortunate.

- Think about commitment level. Figure out how much time you can spend volunteering. Maybe you only have the weekends or a few hours in the evenings? Understanding how much free time you have can help

you choose opportunities that fit within these parameters.

- Research potential organizations. Not all nonprofit groups are created equal. Utilize resources such as CreativeVolunteer that vet charitable groups to determine if they are trustworthy.

- Define your goals. Have goals in mind when selecting opportunities. Defining a goal can help you maintain the motivation to volunteer and see a project through to completion.

- Start small. Wade into a volunteer opportunity slowly to see if it is the right fit. This may include volunteering one day a week or month. Increase the time you spend volunteering once you've found the right place for you.

Volunteering can bring joy to a person's life, especially when individuals find an inspiring opportunity.

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How the body changes with age

Aging is an inevitable component of life. Young children often cannot wait until they get older because of the freedoms that seemingly come with being more mature.

On the flip side, adults often wish they were young again. Time waits for no person, and with aging comes many changes, many of which manifest physically. The following are some components of healthy aging that go beyond graying hair and wrinkling skin.

Bones, joints and muscles

According to the Mayo Clinic, with age bones may become thinner and more fragile. Joints will lose their flexibility, while muscles lose mass and strength, endurance and flexibility. These changes may be accompanied by a loss of stability that can result in balance issues or falls. It's common for the body frame to shrink, and a

person may lose a few inches from his or her height.

A doctor may suggest a bone-density test or supplementation with calcium and vitamin D to keep bones as strong as possible. Physical activity that includes strength training can help keep muscles strong and flexible.

Body fat

As muscle mass diminishes, body fat can increase. The Merck Manual indicates that, by age 75, the percentage of body fat typically doubles compared with what it was during young adulthood. The distribution of fat also changes, which can adjust the shape of the torso.

Heart

Organs in the body also age, and cells begin to die off, making those organs work less efficiently. The heart is one such organ that changes with age. It pumps more than 2.5 million beats during one's lifetime. As a person gets older, blood vessels lose their elasticity, and the heart has to work harder to circulate blood throughout the body, reports Johnson Memorial Health. Exercise can help keep the heart as strong as possible.

Urinary tract and kidneys

The kidneys become smaller as a person ages, which means they may not be able to filter urine as effectively. Urinary incontinence may occur due to hormonal changes or because of an enlarged prostate. Furthermore, the bladder may become less elastic, leading to an urge to urinate more frequently.

Memory and thinking

Older adults experience changes to the brain as they age. Minor effects on memory or thinking skills are common and not usually cause for worry. Staying mentally active by reading, playing word games and engaging in hobbies can help. Following a routine and making lists (as multi-tasking may become challenging) are some additional ways to address memory issues.

These are just some of the changes that can come with aging. Generally speaking, exercising, using the brain and adhering to a balanced, healthy diet can help keep the body functioning well into one's golden years.



COURTESY PHOTO

AGING: There are many components to your body aging beyond gray hair and wrinkles.

What to do when migraines strike

Headaches may be a common nuisance, but that doesn't mean they share common characteristics. For example, migraine sufferers may attest that these headaches can be much harder to endure than others.

The health and wellness resource Healthline says a migraine is a neurological condition that typically causes painful headaches which are accompanied by other symptoms, such as sensitivity to smell, touch, light, and sound. Migraines also may produce numbness or tingling, visual auras and nausea/vomiting.

The American Migraine Foundation advises that migraine attacks feature distinct phases. Recognition and understanding of these phases can help to manage headaches more effectively. Some of the earliest signs of migraine include fatigue, blurred vision, auras, and other prodrome symptoms unique to people's migraine

histories. These conditions can occur anywhere from a few hours to a few days before a migraine attack. It is important to note that symptoms may not occur with every migraine, nor will early symptoms always result in migraines.

Identifying potential migraine symptoms early may help a person reduce the severity of a migraine. Typically, the migraine headache stage can last for several hours or up to three days, says the AMF. People identify migraine pain as pulsating, throbbing, pounding, perforating, and debilitating. Some have compared it to having an ice pick inserted into the head. The Mayo Clinic notes that these steps may help to reduce the severity of migraine symptoms.

- Find a calm environment away from stressors and the bustle of everyday life.
- Relax in a dark, quiet room as light and sound can exacerbate migraine pain.
- Small amounts of caffeine can relieve migraine

pain in the earliest stages and enhance the effects of common OTC pain medications like acetaminophen and ibuprofen. Sip small amounts of caffeinated soda, tea or coffee. Don't overdo it, as that can lead to caffeine withdrawal headaches.

- Try to get steady, uninterrupted sleep each night. Poor sleep may trigger a migraine. If you have difficulty sleeping, listen to soothing music, establish a bedtime routine, go to bed and wake up at the same times each day (even on weekends), and exercise regularly. Speak with a health care provider if sleeplessness is chronic.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet at regular intervals. Fasting may contribute to migraine onset. Avoid foods such as aged cheese, alcohol and chocolate if they trigger your migraines.
- Try to manage stress in any way you can, which may include time management and simplifying your life. Delegate to others if you're taking on too much.



COURTESY PHOTO

MANAGING MIGRAINES: A migraine is a neurological condition that typically causes painful headaches which are accompanied by other symptoms, such as sensitivity to smell, touch, light, and sound.

- Journal when migraine symptoms come on so you can determine if there is a trigger.

Migraine headaches can interrupt life and prove debilitating. Finding relief takes patience. If home remedies

do not suffice, people can speak to their doctors about possible medical therapies.

The risks of an overly sedentary lifestyle

Health experts call it "sitting disease." It refers to when people spend more of their time behind a desk or steering wheel of a car or planted in front of a television than they do engaging in physical activity. According to the American Heart Association, sedentary jobs have increased by 83 percent since 1950, and technology has reduced many people's need to get up and move. Inactivity is taking a considerable toll on public health.

A study from the University of Cambridge equated inactivity with being obese. The Mayo Clinic advises that research has linked sedentary behavior to a host of health concerns, and found those who sat for more than eight hours a day with no physical activity had a risk of dying similar to the risks of fatality linked to obesity and smoking. Increased blood pressure, high blood sugar,

abnormal cholesterol levels, and excess body fat all can be attributed to inactivity.

Mental health can be adversely affected by a sedentary lifestyle as well. Australian researchers surveyed more than 3,300 government employees and found men who sat for more than six hours a day at work were 90 percent more likely to feel moderate psychological distress, such as restlessness, nervousness or hopelessness, than those who sat for less than three hours a day.

In addition, a sedentary lifestyle can significantly increase a person's risk for various types of cancer. A German meta-analysis of 43 studies involving four million people indicated those who sit the most have higher propensities to develop colon cancer, endometrial cancer and lung cancer.

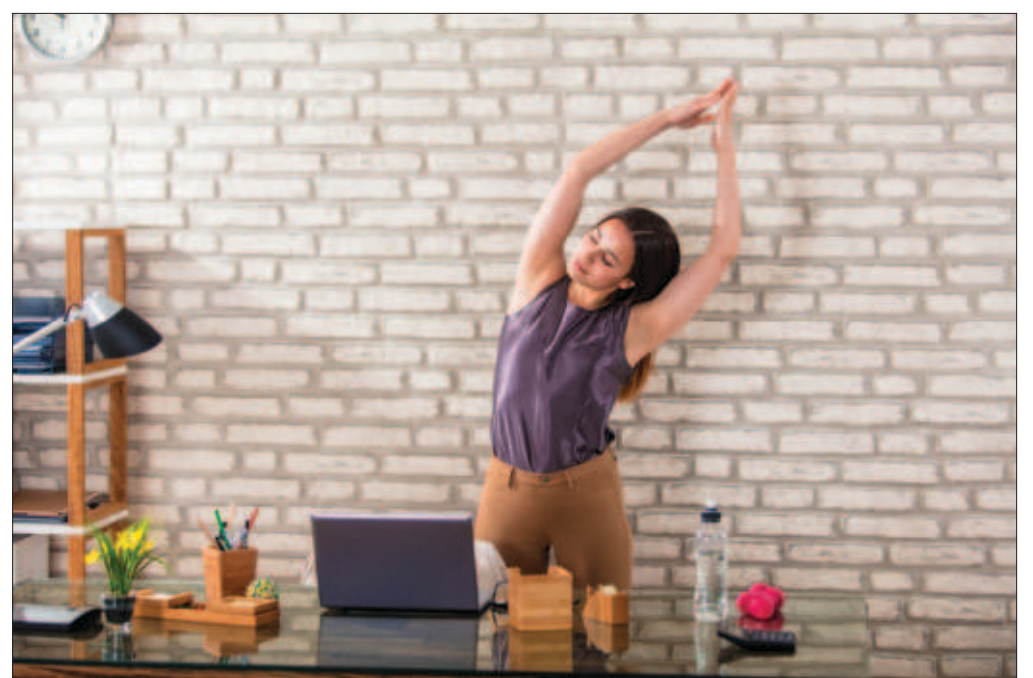
Johns Hopkins Medical Center says research shows that high levels of exercise at some point in the day can

lessen some risk, but it's not entirely effective if most of the rest of the day a person is inactive. Risk for cardiovascular disease increases significantly for people who spend 10 hours or more sitting each day.

Various medical organizations recommend individuals get up and move at any opportunity to help reduce risks of inactivity. Erin Michos, M.D., M.H.S., associate director of preventive cardiology at the Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease, advises people who are very sedentary to aim for 4,000 steps per day. Such individuals can then build up to a target of 10,000 steps daily.

The Mayo Clinic recommends these strategies to reduce the amount of time you spend sitting.

- Stand while talking on the phone or watching television
- Invest in a standing desk
- Get up from sitting every



COURTESY PHOTO

KEEP MOVING: Moving every 30 minutes is one way to reduce the harmful effects of a sedentary lifestyle.

30 minutes

- Walk at lunch or during meetings

Sedentary lifestyles can affect health in many negative ways. But there are various

ways to get up and go over the course of a typical day.



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Get serious about stroke

Stroke is a serious medical condition and a leading cause of disability in North America. According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. However, 80 percent of strokes are preventable.

Sometimes called a brain attack, or a cerebrovascular accident, a stroke happens when something blocks blood supply to part of the brain or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This can deprive the brain of oxygen and cause brain cells to begin to die within minutes, warns the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

A stroke is a medical emergency. If someone is suspected of having a stroke, emergency personnel should be called immediately. Every minute counts when a person is suffering a stroke, and medical personnel can begin potentially life-saving treat-

ment on the way to an emergency room.

Symptoms of stroke

Sometimes symptoms of stroke can occur out of nowhere, and other times there may be subtle signs that something has been brewing. The Mayo Clinic says these are the most common signs of stroke.

- Trouble speaking and understanding what others are saying. This may include slurred words or trouble understanding speech.
- Paralysis can occur in the face, arm or leg. Numbness or weakness also may occur. This often affects just one side of the body.
- Sometimes there is trouble seeing in one or both

eyes, including blurry or blackened vision.

- Headaches will come on severely, and can be accompanied by vomiting, altered consciousness or dizziness.

- Someone having a stroke may stumble or lose balance and experience coordination issues.

The National Stroke Association and other organizations use the acronym FAST to educate the public about detecting signs of stroke.

- **F (Face):** Ask the person to smile and look for drooping on one side.

- **A (Arms):** Have the person raise both arms and check to see if one arm drifts downward or cannot be raised.

- **S (Speech):** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase and check for slurring or strange sounds.

- **T (Time):** Call 911 or emergency medical help immediately if any of these indicators are present.

Types of stroke

There are different types

of stroke. Most strokes are ischemic strokes, says the CDC. Ischemic stroke occurs when a blood clot or other particles like fatty deposits block blood vessels to the brain.

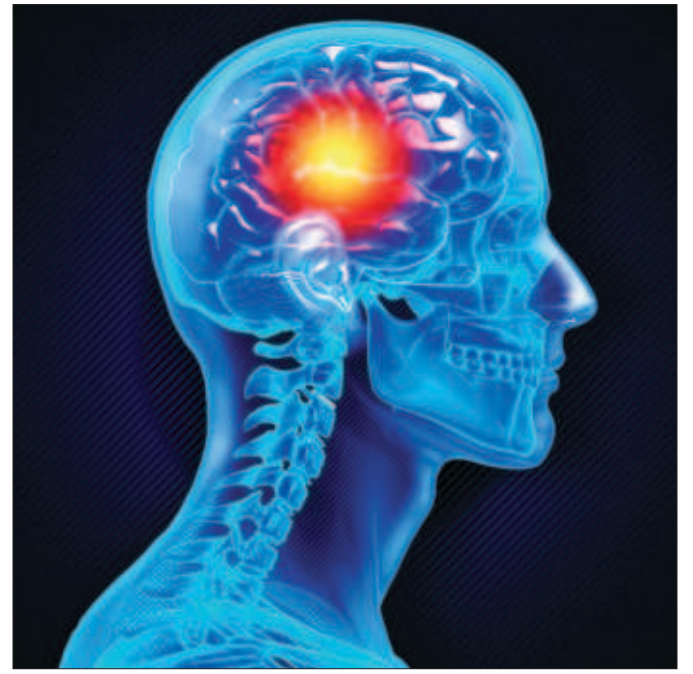
A hemorrhagic stroke happens when an artery in the brain leaks blood or ruptures. High blood pressure and aneurysms often are culprits in hemorrhagic stroke.

Transient ischemic attacks, also called mini-strokes, serve as warnings of a future stroke. Blood clots often cause these as well.

Diagnosing and treating stroke

Doctors will use various imaging techniques to check for brain and blood vessel health if there is risk for stroke. Blood pressure and other general health assessments can give doctors an idea of potential risk factors for future stroke incidents.

If blood clots are present, doctors may use medication, stents and surgery to break up or address clots.



COURTESY PHOTO

STROKES ARE SERIOUS: Every minute counts when a person is suffering a stroke, and medical personnel can begin potentially life-saving treatment on the way to an emergency room.

Stroke is a medical emergency. Individuals are urged to take stroke risk seriously and act promptly if symp-

toms are present.

Summer safety tips to consider

Summer is synonymous with relaxation and fun in the sun. The easygoing nature of summer can make it easy to overlook safety concerns that run the gamut from heat-related illnesses to bug bites to water play injuries. Though no one wants to rain on their own summer parade, keeping these safety tips in mind can ensure the coming months are as safe as they are fun.

Safeguard against the threat of heat-related illnesses. Sizzling summer days pose a significant threat if the proper measures aren't take to avoid heat-related

illnesses. According to the National Safety Council, heat exhaustion, which occurs when the body loses excessive water and salt, and heat stroke, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes is marked by the body's inability to control its temperature, can escalate rapidly. The NSC identifies individuals who work outdoors, infants and young children, people who are 65 and older, people who are ill, and people who are overweight as those most at risk of heat-related illnesses. Such illnesses are entirely preventable, and the CDC recommends remaining

indoors in air conditioned rooms, drinking plenty of fluids but avoiding alcohol, wearing loose and lightweight clothing as well as a hat, and replacing salt lost from sweating by drinking fruit juice or sports drinks.

Apply sunscreen. Long days in the summer sun may be a great way to relax, but it's imperative that individuals apply sunscreen before going outside and then reapply it throughout the day as necessary. Sunburn is not only unpleasant, it also increases a person's risk for skin cancer and affects the body's ability to cool itself, which can increase the risk

for heat stroke.

Protect against mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are more than a mere nuisance. Mosquitoes can carry an assortment of viruses, including Zika virus and West Nile virus. And though such viruses are often thought of as a problem for people in faraway lands, the NSC notes that the Aedes mosquito, which is a known transmitter of the Zika virus, has appeared in various regions of the globe, including the continental United States and popular vacation destinations like Mexico and Central and South America. The NSC recommends that everyone,

and especially individuals who work outdoors, apply mosquito repellent before going outside and to continue to do so as necessary throughout the day. In addition, clothing treated with the insecticide permethrin may help to repel mosquitoes.

Exercise caution around water. The CDC reports that drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death for children between the ages of one and four. Though children might be most vulnerable to water-related accidents and death, adults also must exercise caution when around the

water. The NSC recommends individuals avoid the water, be it in a lake, river, ocean, or pool, unless they know how to swim. Individuals also should never swim alone and only swim in areas supervised by a lifeguard. When swimming at a private residence, children should never be allowed to swim unless an adult is supervising. Adults also should avoid alcohol when swimming.

Summer is a season to relax, but it's also a season when safety should be a top priority for people of all ages.

Dos and don'ts of healthy weight loss

Maintaining a healthy weight promotes long-term health. Being overweight or obese are risk factors for various conditions, including type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The World Health Organization reports that the worldwide obesity rate has tripled since 1975. In 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults were overweight. Of these, more than 650 million were obese.

Health issues related to obesity are largely preventable. Losing weight in a healthy manner is essential

for safe and lasting results. Individuals aspiring to lose weight can follow these guidelines on what to do and what not to do.

DO add lean protein sources to your diet. Healthline indicates the body burns calories when digesting and metabolizing protein, so a high-protein diet can help to shed up to 80 to 100 calories per day. Protein also helps you to feel full, reducing the propensity to overeat.

DON'T get hung up on numbers early on. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises that even modest weight loss of 5 to

10 percent of your total body weight is bound to produce health benefits, such as improvements in blood sugar levels, cholesterol and blood pressure. Start small and gradually build up.

DO eat at least four servings of vegetables and three servings of fruits daily. Produce contains an abundance of vital nutrients and is often fiber-rich and low in calories, which helps you to feel full.

DON'T overlook the impact of beverages on weight loss. The calories in sugary beverages, including some all-natural fruit juices, can add up quickly. Stick to water, tea or

other unsweetened beverages to help with weight loss.

DO get moving more. The Mayo Clinic notes that while it is possible to lose weight without exercise, getting moving can help burn off the excess calories you can't cut through diet alone. Exercise boosts metabolism and benefits mood and strengthens muscles and the cardiovascular system as well.

DON'T go shopping while hungry. If you do, you may make impulse buys that compromise healthy eating plans.

DO speak with a doctor if you are vetting diet and exer-

cise plans. A healthcare professional can assist you by indicating if a particular diet or fitness routine is acceptable for your age, goals and current health status.

DON'T forget to track eating. Most healthy diets involve some sort of calorie-counting, whether they actually require you to document your intake or use a formula to attribute "points" or another measure related to what you eat. Writing or tracking the foods and beverages you consume will provide the most honest assessment of habits that could affect weight loss.

DO include foods you enjoy. Completely restricting access to occasional treats may cause you to resent healthy eating, which can derail weight loss goals. The principle of moderation can apply to healthy weight loss as long as you account for the more calorie-dense foods.

Losing weight in a healthy manner is achievable when you seek guidance and follow some time-tested techniques.



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Is Bariatric Surgery in Mexico worth the cost?

Coryell Now Offers the Most Competitive Price in Central Texas

PRESS RELEASE

Traveling south of the border has its perks. Sunny beaches, delicious food, and rich cultural history make Mexico a desirable vacation spot. But, when it comes to a life-changing surgery, is the bargain surgery worth the added cost?

Visiting another country to obtain healthcare, known as “medical tourism,” creates a considerable amount of potential complications. If you’ve researched bariatric surgery, you’ve likely seen that a common trend for candidates – especially those looking to save money – is to have the operation performed in Mexico. While these procedures appear to cost less, the risk to your individual health and safety becomes a costly consideration. Further treatment is often needed upon returning, possibly amounting to thousands of dollars out-of-pocket. The possible risks of this

option include:
 · There is no individualized patient plan and education, resulting in long-term complications after the surgery and unsuccessful long-term weight loss.
 · Mexico surgery centers do not have to adhere to the same guidelines as clinics and surgeons in the U.S. In the U.S., patients are protected by healthcare laws and practice standards.
 · Patients have to fly home before fully recovering from surgery, increasing the risk of developing pulmonary embolism and blood clots.
 · There is no nutritional counseling or follow-up care

to monitor for malnutrition, which can lead to short- and long-term health problems, slow recovery from wounds and illnesses and vitamin deficiencies, which can cause hair and nail loss.

· The inability for patients or families to take legal action as a result of harm or death.

Adding travel expenses, lodging, and time away from work, the cost of crossing the border for bariatric surgery adds up quickly. Instead, consider staying close to home with Coryell and experience:

· Specialized care by a doctor trained in bariatrics and metabolic surgery

· A medical team who will provide a customized care plan to meet individual patient needs

· A comprehensive guide you and your medical team use to equip you with the knowledge needed to maintain a successful weight loss journey



COURTESY PHOTO

MEDICAL TOURISM: Visiting another country to obtain healthcare, known as “medical tourism,” creates a considerable amount of potential complications.

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· No travel requirements before or after the procedure

· Lifelong follow-up care and relationships
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ter offers bariatric surgery led by David Gochnour, MD, complemented by expert nutrition advice and behavioral health counseling to maximize results and long-term success. Coryell Health is now offering the most competitive price in Central

Texas for bariatric surgery. Think bariatric surgery could change your life for the better? Call to schedule a free consultation at 254-404-2555.

The link between stress and cancer

Adults have an issue with stress. According to a survey from the American Psychological Association released in December 2022, more than one in four Americans indicated they expected to experience more stress at the start of 2023 than they had at the start of 2022. And it's not just Americans feeling the sting of stress, as the American Institute of Stress indicates 35 percent of individuals across 143 countries feel

stressed out. Stress is not always a bad thing. Roughly a decade ago, researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, discovered that acute stress in rats caused the stem cells in their brain to grow rapidly into new nerve cells that ultimately improved the animals' mental performance. However, chronic stress, which the APA characterizes as constant and persistent stress over an extended period of time, can have a profoundly negative effect

on overall health. And that negative effect includes a link to cancer, especially for survivors of the disease. A 2020 study from researchers at The Wistar Institute Cancer Center in Philadelphia found that a stress hormone triggered a reaction in immune cells that awakened dormant cancer cells. Those cells eventually formed into tumors. When discussing the link between stress and cancer, it's important to note that many studies, including the

one conducted by researchers at the Wistar Institute, have shown that stress and cancer can cause the disease to grow and spread in mice. The National Cancer Institute notes that studies have not identified a clear link between stress and cancer outcomes in humans. But researchers urge patience, noting that the Wistar Institute study is a significant step forward in studying the potential link between stress and cancer in humans. Further study in the coming years could very well identify a similar link in humans as the one already discovered in mice.

In the meantime, individuals are urged to take stress seriously and not simply accept it as a mere fact of twenty-first century life. And that's especially important for individuals who have been diagnosed with cancer, including those who are in treatment and others who have successfully finished their treatment. According to City of Hope, one of just 52 NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers in the United States, talking to others and relying on loved ones when receiving treatment; speaking with someone in a neutral position, such as a therapist; and exercising reg-

ularly are some of the ways to overcome chronic stress. City of Hope also notes the stress-reducing benefits of wellness practices such as meditation and yoga in regard to combatting stress. Chronic stress can have a lasting and negative impact on overall health. Though the link between chronic stress and cancer requires more study before researchers can reach a conclusion about such a connection, individuals are urged to embrace the many ways they can reduce chronic stress with a goal of living healthier, happier and, hopefully, cancer-free lives.

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