

Health and Wellness: Live Well, Work Well Flyers

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After walking, gentle stretching can help keep your muscles from being sore. It is also wise to warm up before walking fast or going a long distance.

Cautions

Make sure to be safe while walking outside:

* Always walk on sidewalks (or on the left side of the street facing traffic if there are no sidewalks).
* Be aware of traffic.
* Carry identification and your cellphone in case of emergencies.
* In the evening hours, wear reflective gear and/or carry a flashlight in front of you.

Going the Distance

Once you get started, you will want to stay motivated. Consider finding a walking friend, joining a walking club or registering for a challenging walking event. Remember that you will not notice immediate physical changes to your body, but by adding walking and a healthy diet to your daily routine, it won’t be long before you look and feel better.

Note: Before beginning any walking program, consider discussing your exercise plans with your doctor, particularly if you have health issues such as diabetes.

# FITNESS FIRST: WALKING

If you are looking for an easy and inexpensive way to stay healthy or lose weight, you need nothing more than your own two feet. Walking is an ideal form of exercise—it’s free, and you can do it almost anytime and anywhere. Walking is also a great way to maintain a healthy weight or to shed those extra pounds.

The First Step: Good Shoes

Whether you walk outdoors, on a treadmill or at the local mall, you will want to invest in a good pair of walking shoes. Walking shoes are designed to give you the flexibility, support and proper push off needed for walking. Everyone’s feet are different, but look for shoes that are light, flexible and immediately feel comfortable. Walking shoes should not require a "breaking in" period.

Setting the Pace

You can walk to maintain your health or as part of a weight-loss program. To get moving, experts advise beginners to start with a 15- or 30-minute walk daily, adding five or 10 minutes to the walking session time per week. More specifically:

* To maintain your health, walk 30 minutes a day most days of the week at a “talking” pace, which means you are able to carry on a conversation comfortably while walking.
* If you are walking for weight loss, walk 45 to 60 minutes a day at a medium to fast pace. In addition, do not skip more than two days per week.
* For aerobic and cardiovascular fitness, walk 20 minutes at a very fast pace (you should be breathing hard), three to four days a week.

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the higher the risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney damage.

Cholesterol Screening

Men age 20 or older should have their cholesterol tested every five years or more frequently if the doctor recommends it. High levels of cholesterol raise the risk of heart attack and stroke. Cholesterol is a form of fat carried in the blood by lipoproteins. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL or “bad” cholesterol) deposits cholesterol on the artery walls. High-density lipoprotein (HDL or “good” cholesterol) carries cholesterol away from the arteries to the liver for disposal. Problems occur when LDL deposits too much cholesterol on the artery walls, or when HDL does not take enough away. This can lead to a buildup of cholesterol-containing fatty deposits (plaques) in the arteries, a condition known as atherosclerosis.

# MEN’S HEALTH PREVENTIVE SCREENINGS, PART I

Preventive care, including regular doctor visits, is important for everyone. The following screenings are recommended for men to maintain good health and catch health problems early:

Body Measurement

The American Heart Association recommends that men over age 20 have body measurements taken every two years, although your frequency may vary based on age and existing medical conditions. Measuring height, weight, waist and body mass index will determine whether you are overweight or obese and if your weight is a threat to your health. Overweight people are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure and increase their risk for other serious conditions.

Blood Pressure

Men should receive blood pressure screenings at least every two years. Preventive screening of blood pressure can lead to early detection of high blood pressure (hypertension). The cuff placed around the arm during a blood pressure screening measures the amount of pressure the heart generates when pumping blood through the arteries (systolic pressure), and the amount of pressure in the arteries when the heart is at rest between beats (diastolic pressure). Narrowed arteries limit the flow of blood.

In general, the more blood your heart pumps and the narrower your arteries are, the harder your heart must work to pump the same amount of blood. The longer high blood pressure goes undetected and untreated,

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Fasting Blood Sugar

The fasting blood sugar test measures the level of sugar (glucose) in the blood after fasting for eight hours. High glucose levels can be an indication of diabetes. The American Diabetes Association recommends a blood sugar test every three years for men age 45 and older. If you are at risk for diabetes, your doctor may perform these tests at an earlier age, and more frequently. You should also receive a blood sugar test if you experience symptoms of diabetes such as excessive thirst, frequent urination, unexplained weight loss, fatigue or slow-healing cuts or bruises.

# ONE-MINUTE OFFICE WORKOUTS

Even if your job requires you to sit for eight or more hours, you can combat the effects of prolonged sitting with a variety of one-minute office workouts—right at your desk—to keep yourself active and improve your body’s strength and flexibility.

For Lower Body Strength

Sit in your chair. Extend one leg out in front of you. Hold it straight for five seconds. Raise it as high as you can and hold for five more seconds. Switch legs and repeat, for a total of three times on each side.

For Your Core and Arms

Sit in your chair with your legs crossed in front of you (like a pretzel), and your feet on the seat. Place your hands on the armrests, engage your core and raise yourself a couple inches above the seat. Hold for 10 seconds. Rest a few seconds, and repeat five more times.

For Your Biceps

Sit tall with your abs pulled in. Hold a dumbbell or filled water bottle in one hand, with your arm stretched out straight and your palm facing the ceiling. Curl it up towards your shoulder and then back to the starting position 15 times. Alternate arms, and repeat.

To Stretch Stiff Muscles and Relieve Tension

Sit straight, facing forward. Turn your head to the left while turning your torso to the right. Hold for 5 seconds. Keep alternating sides for a total of 60 seconds.

Every Little Bit Counts

The impact of movement—even a leisurely walk—can

be compelling. The muscle activity needed to move the body triggers important processes related to the breakdown of fats and sugars. This burns more calories, which can lead to weight loss and increased energy. In contrast, these processes stall when sitting, and health risks increase. Standing and actively moving kicks the body’s vital processes back into action.

The following are easy ways to incorporate movement into your workday.

* Stand while talking on the phone or while eating lunch.
* Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
* Go for brief walks as often as possible.
* Ask your employer about the option of investing in a sit-to-stand desk.
* Walk or go to the gym during your break.
* Replace your desk chair with an exercise ball for all-day core strengthening and reduced stress on the lower back.

Remember to consult with a doctor before starting any type of exercise regime.

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* Heart palpitations
* Weakness or fatigue

Call your doctor if you begin to have new symptoms or if they become more frequent or severe.

Treatment

The goals of treatment for heart disease are to relieve symptoms, control or reduce risk factors, stop or slow further damage to the arteries, and prevent and treat cardiac events. Treatment includes several options:

* Self-care and prevention
* Medications
* Procedures to open blocked or narrowed arteries or to bypass them
* Cardiac rehabilitation

Self-care and Prevention

You can follow a healthy lifestyle to help prevent heart disease:

* Get regular medical check-ups.
* Don’t smoke.
* Maintain a healthy weight.

# HEART DISEASE

Heart disease is a common term for coronary artery disease. It is the number one cause of death in both men and women over the age of 60 in the United States.

Causes

Heart disease is caused by atherosclerosis—a buildup of plaque in the inner walls of the arteries—which narrows, slows or blocks the flow of blood to the heart.

Risk Factors

Controllable risk factors for heart disease include the following:

* High blood pressure
* High LDL cholesterol
* Type 2 diabetes
* Smoking
* Being overweight or obese
* Lack of physical activity
* Using illegal drugs, such as cocaine

Warning Signs

The symptoms you experience depend on the type and severity of your heart condition. Common signs and symptoms of heart disease include the following:

* Shortness of breath
* Dizziness
* Chest pain or discomfort

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* Take medications as prescribed.
* If you are at a higher risk for heart disease, ask your doctor about low-dose aspirin therapy.
* Watch for signs of diabetes and see your doctor if you have any symptoms.
* Follow a diet low in saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol.
* Limit sodium intake to 1,500 to 2,400 milligrams per day.
* Exercise regularly.
* Manage stress by practicing relaxation techniques.
* Drink alcohol in moderation. Check with your doctor to find out if and how much you should drink.

# WHAT ARE YOUR NUMBERS?

Knowing your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and body mass index (BMI) are extremely vital in determining whether you are at risk for developing major illnesses, such as heart disease and diabetes. If you know your numbers are out of the healthy range, you can take measures to get yourself back into good health.

Cholesterol

An unexpected heart attack may be caused by years of living with high cholesterol and extra fat stored in the body. Total cholesterol should be 200 or less. You should also ask your doctor what your HDL cholesterol (good) and LDL cholesterol (bad) levels are.

Having high total cholesterol, high LDL or low HDL can put you at risk for a heart attack or stroke. Since there are no symptoms of high cholesterol, it is imperative that you know your numbers.

Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the amount of force that it takes for your heart to pump blood through your body. High blood pressure, known as hypertension, increases your risk of heart attack, stroke and kidney disease. It can also cause damage to your brain, eyes and arteries. Normal blood pressure should be less than 120 over 80.

Much like cholesterol, there are no symptoms of high blood pressure, so knowing your numbers is key to good health.

Blood Sugar

Glucose is sugar that is stored in the blood as your

main source of energy. If your glucose levels are too high or too low, you can develop diabetes. Normal blood sugar level is under 100 when using the FPG test.

Since diabetes can strike anyone of any age, it is essential that you know your blood sugar number. This is especially true if you experience any of the following symptoms of diabetes: frequent urination, extreme hunger, thirst, unusual weight loss, increased fatigue or blurry vision. If diabetes is left untreated, it can lead to heart disease, blindness, amputation of the arms or legs and/or kidney disease.

Body Mass Index

BMI measures your weight in relation to your height. This measurement indicates whether your weight falls within a normal, healthy range. A BMI over 25 indicates that you are overweight and a BMI over 30 indicates that you are obese.

Carrying extra weight can lead to high cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes and other chronic conditions. To figure out your BMI, use the calculator at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/BMI/bmicalc.htm.](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/BMI/bmicalc.htm)

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A good-sized snack for a typical adult may be a single-serving container of yogurt, but for a preschooler, two or three tablespoons of yogurt is enough.

Make Eating Fun for the Whole Family

Family meals can be a time to monitor what children are eating and to reconnect with each other. Involve children in food preparation and clean up, and sit down with them when they eat. The idea is to build healthy lifelong eating habits.

Some healthy eating tips include the following:

* Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables—half your plate at each meal should be vegetables or fruit.
* Beware of sweetened drinks—sodas and sports drinks are high in calories. Keep in mind that the calories in juice can also quickly add up.
* Choose food sensibly when eating out. Restaurants are often required to make nutrition information readily available—if you do not see brochures sitting out, or nutrition information listed on the menu, ask.

# EAT WELL, LIVE WELL

Replacing unhealthy eating habits with healthier ones can be difficult, especially if unhealthy habits are all you have ever known. One key to making lasting improvements in your diet is to make changes in stages. Start with a small, simple change and stick to it for a week. After mastering one change, add another.

Here Are Some Ideas to Get You Started:

* Eat breakfast.
* Replace one sugary drink per day with a glass of water.
* Eat one to two more fruits or vegetables each day.
* Plan a healthy snack for each day of the week.
* Switch to a low-fat version of one of your favorite foods.
* Plan three meals and two snacks every day.
* Plan as many home-cooked meals as you can, as they usually have fewer calories, more reasonable portions and cost less than typical meals eaten at restaurants.

Set an Example

Parents play a big role in guiding their children’s eating habits with the examples they set, the foods they make available in the home and the mealtime experiences that they create for their families.

Offer healthy snacks such as fruit, low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt, frozen juice bars, applesauce, celery, apples with peanut butter, raw vegetables, graham crackers, fig bars or whole wheat crackers with low-fat cheese. Large portions contain too many calories.

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Healthy Food Tips When Eating Out

* Ask if you do not know what is in a dish or the serving size.
* Eat the same portion size you would at home.
* Ask for sauces, gravy and dressings on the side—or avoid them altogether.
* Order foods that are not breaded or fried.
* Order fruit for dessert.
* Ask for substitutions, such as a vegetable instead of fries.
* Ask for low-calorie versions of food. Vinegar, oil or a squeeze of lemon are all better than high-fat dressings or sauces.

# CHOLESTEROL AND YOUR HEART HEALTH

High cholesterol increases your chances of developing heart disease—the leading cause of death for adults in the United States. Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in fats in your blood which your body needs to function. Having too much cholesterol, though, can be dangerous for your health.

What’s in a Number?

In the past, doctors thought that total cholesterol was a good indicator of one’s risk for heart disease, heart attack, diabetes and stroke. The lower your low-density lipoprotein (LDL) numbers and the higher your high-density lipoprotein (HDL) numbers, the better—or so they thought.

While measuring HDL, LDL and total cholesterol is helpful, many experts now believe that assessing the **size** of lipoprotein particles can also be beneficial.

The Lipoprotein Link

Research indicates that the blockage of arteries (which often leads to heart disease) is caused by the number and size of the lipoprotein particles that carry cholesterol throughout your body. These lipoprotein particles can build up in your arteries.

Think of it this way: These lipoproteins are the “cars” that carry “passengers” (cholesterol) along the “highways” (arteries)—it’s not the number of passengers in a car that causes a traffic jam (blocked artery), it’s the number of cars.

Your Particle Number

The number and particle size of lipoproteins in your blood are the measurements that can help your doctor determine your risk for heart attack, heart disease and stroke. Simple blood tests are available that can provide a more detailed look at how your particles measure up.

The number of LDL particles circulating in your blood is an important factor in evaluating your heart health. Generally, the lower your number of total LDL particles, and the larger the size of these particles, the lower your risk is for heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

Getting Tested

The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends routine cholesterol screenings for men over the age of 35 and women over the 45. Screenings may also be appropriate for younger adults who possess certain risk factors, such as a family history of cardiovascular disease.

By being proactive and seeking preventive care, you can help catch high cholesterol early and reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

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# WOMEN’S HEALTH: PREVENTIVE SCREENINGS, PART I

Women should regularly meet with their doctor to discuss their overall health, ask questions and get preventive care. Preventive screenings help detect disease and illness earlier, often leading to faster recovery or less-severe consequences.

Bone Density Test

This test measures the density of your bones (lower back, hip region, wrist and heel) to help determine your risk of developing osteoporosis, which makes bones more fragile and likely to break. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that women age 65 and older be routinely screened. They suggest that routine screenings begin after menopause for women with an increased risk of developing osteoporosis.

Dental Exam

The American Dental Association recommends regular dental exams to help detect tooth decay and oral cancer. Your dentist can also evaluate your bite and identify problems such as grinding your teeth or issues with your jaw joint.

Eye Exam

Eye exams can determine whether you need glasses or contact lenses, and can identify vision problems such as glaucoma, macular degeneration and cataracts. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends the following screening schedule:

* At least once in your twenties, and twice in your thirties.
* A baseline eye exam at age 40, then as doctor recommends until age 64.
* Every one to two years beginning at age 65.

Hearing Test

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association recommends hearing screenings at least every 10 years until age 50, and every three years thereafter.

Skin Exam

To check for skin cancer, your doctor will examine your skin for moles that are irregularly shaped, have varied colors, are asymmetric, are greater than the size of a pencil eraser, or have grown or changed since your last visit. You should have a skin exam every three years between the ages of 20 and 40, and annually thereafter. It is also important to check your own skin once a month.

Blood Pressure Screenings

Healthy women with normal blood pressure (120/80 or below) should receive blood pressure screenings at least every two years.

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# SURVIVING THE SUMMER HEAT

Summer heat can be more than uncomfortable—it can be a threat to your health, especially for older adults and children. Whatever your age, do not let the summer heat get the best of you.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion occurs when a person cannot sweat enough to cool the body, usually the result of not drinking enough fluids during hot weather. It generally develops when a person is playing, working, or exercising outside in extreme heat. Here are some symptoms:

* Dizziness, weakness, nausea, headache and vomiting
* Blurry vision
* Body temperature rising to 101°F
* Sweaty skin
* Feeling hot and thirsty
* Difficulty speaking

A person suffering from heat exhaustion must move to a cool place and drink plenty of water.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the result of untreated heat exhaustion. Here are some symptoms:

* Sweating
* Unawareness of heat and thirst
* Body temperature rising rapidly to above 101°F
* Confusion or delirium
* Loss of consciousness or seizure

Heat stroke is a serious medical emergency that must be treated quickly by a trained professional. Until help arrives, cool the person down by placing ice on the neck, armpits and groin. If the person is awake and able to swallow, give him or her fluids.

Tips for Staying Cool

Below are some tips for staying safe in the heat:

* Drink plenty of water—In hot weather, drink enough to quench your thirst. The average adult needs eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day—more during heat spells.
* Dress for the weather—When outside, wear lightweight clothing made of natural fabrics and a well-ventilated hat.
* Stay inside if possible—Do errands and outside chores early or late in the day.
* Eat light—Replace heavy or hot meals with lighter, refreshing foods.
* Think cool! Take a cool shower or apply a cold compress to your pulse points. Try spending time indoors at an air-conditioned mall or movie theater.

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# WORKPLACE STRESS

Nearly 80 percent of Americans consider their jobs stressful. While it may not be possible to eliminate job stress altogether, you can learn to manage it effectively.

Common job stressors include a heavy workload, intense pressure to perform at high levels, job insecurity, long work hours, excessive travel, office politics and conflicts with co-workers. While dealing with stress is a normal part of everyday life, here are some early warning signs that signify red flags, alerting you to stress on the job:

* Insomnia
* Anxiety or depression
* Low morale
* Short temper
* Headache
* Stomach or back problems

Managing Job Stress

The good news is that it is possible to manage job stress by becoming aware of what increases or decreases your stress levels. Here are six methods to help manage stress at work:

* Plan and prioritize: Do not panic, make a list to prioritize your work, set realistic deadlines, do not rush into the first idea you have and always have an alternative plan.
* Focus on what you can control: You know what your job tasks are. Break the larger tasks into smaller, more doable steps.
* Slow down: Think things through before you act, and begin with a result in mind.
* Limit interruptions: Use your voicemail to your advantage and only take calls that are a priority when you are on a tight deadline. Set aside designated times throughout the day to respond to e-mails and phone calls.
* Use all of your resources: If things do not go exactly as planned, do not solely rely on yourself. Ask for help when you need it.
* Take a break: To release stress, make time to take a short break. Taking a walk or discussing your work situation with another person may help you gain a fresh perspective.

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# COLD OR FLU?

Though the common cold and seasonal influenza share several symptoms, there are points of differentiation that will help you identify which you may have in order to seek proper treatment. It is important to tell the difference, as the flu can result in more serious health complications, while the cold likely will not.

Common Cold

Typically, symptoms of the common cold come on gradually, and may start with a sore throat or irritated sinuses. The most common symptoms of a cold are nasal congestion, sneezing and runny nose. Symptoms can also include a cough, mild headache and minor body aches. Young children may get a low-grade fever as well, but a fever in older children or adults typically indicates the flu.

People are generally contagious during the first three days they have a cold. Symptoms tend to go away within a week.

Seasonal Flu

Unlike the common cold, flu symptoms usually come on suddenly and vigorously, often starting with a high-grade fever, headache, body aches and fatigue. In addition, flu symptoms can include a dry cough, sore throat, and sometimes a runny or stuffy nose.

Symptoms are generally more severe than with a cold. Flu symptoms tend to gradually improve after two to five days, but can last for a week or more. You should stay home for at least 24 after your fever is gone to avoid passing your illness to others.

Prevention

There are strategies that can help you avoid getting sick from either of these conditions. These include frequent hand washing, sanitizing commonly touched surfaces, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth. If you are sick, cough and sneeze into your elbow to prevent spreading germs to others.

Also consider getting a seasonal flu vaccine each year, which is now recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for all people over 6 months of age.

Treatment

For the common cold, a doctor visit is usually unnecessary. Over-the-counter medications can be effective in treating symptoms. For the flu, a doctor may prescribe anti-viral drugs that will help decrease the severity and length of symptoms.

Potentially serious health complications can occur in people suffering from the flu. Call your doctor if you think your symptoms are worsening or if you have a condition such as asthma, diabetes or are pregnant.

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# FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL WELLNESS

We all know that financial stress can be a burden, but it can also have a negative effect on your health. Understanding the relationship between financial and physical wellness can help you improve both areas of your life.

Health Concerns

Financial stress often causes anxiety, depression and hopelessness, and that stress can also contribute to heart disease, high blood pressure, insomnia, more frequent colds and minor illnesses and more. Plus, many cope with financial stress in unhealthy ways, such as smoking, drinking and overeating, which can decrease overall health.

Impact on Medical Care

Often, people with financial burdens neglect important preventive care or medication regimens. While this saves money in the short term, it often leads to more serious health problems down the road—and more medical bills.

Making Smarter Decisions

Health care is expensive, but it should not be neglected due to financial trouble. Instead, there are ways to spend your money more wisely, which will improve your overall health and ease your financial strain.

* Utilize preventive care services. Screenings and check-ups can help prevent bigger medical problems (and expenses) down the road.
* Manage chronic conditions. By not adhering to treatment and medication regimens, your condition could worsen significantly. Consider

mail-order pharmacies to save money on your prescriptions.

* Learn more about your employer’s benefit plans. There may be cost-saving options of which you are not taking full advantage.

Coping with Financial Stress

Although the strategies above will help your medical costs and overall health, you likely still face financial worries. Here are healthy ways to cope with that stress and make it more manageable:

* Recognize your unhealthy coping methods and find alternatives such as meditation, exercising or talking with a friend.
* Take care of yourself. Get enough sleep, eat right, drink plenty of water and exercise regularly. Make time for yourself to just relax and unwind.
* Talk to an advisor regarding your financial troubles. You won’t be able to fix them overnight, but having a plan of action can help you feel in control and minimize feelings of hopelessness.

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