



MOUNTAIN STATES

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“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

DECEMBER 2004

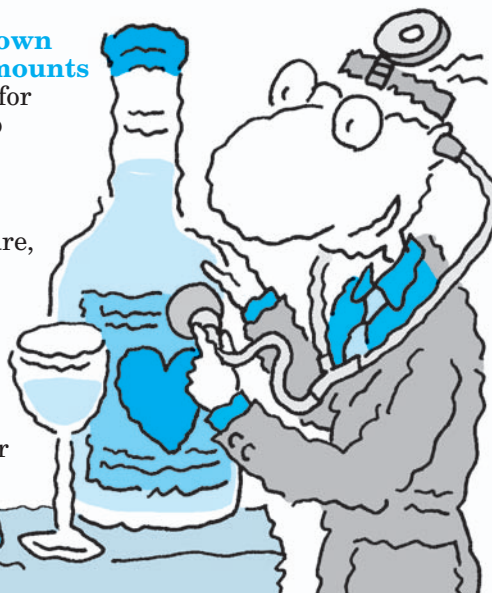
Alcohol & your heart

Research has repeatedly shown that drinking moderate amounts of alcohol (up to two drinks a day for men, one drink for women) can help your heart.

But alcohol — even in moderate amounts — can cause other health problems, such as high blood pressure, colon cancer, and breast cancer (or liver disease when people abuse it).

That’s why no health expert recommends we start drinking (or drink more) to prevent heart disease.

There are other ways to keep your heart healthy.



What alcohol does for your heart | ...But these can do the same thing

Controls blood vessel inflammation	Berries — especially blueberries*
Prevents oxidation of “bad” LDL cholesterol	Concord grape juice*
Increases good HDL cholesterol	Brisk physical activity
Keeps blood platelets from clotting	Aspirin — for some people (talk to your doctor before beginning aspirin therapy)
Encourages healthy blood vessel dilation	Black tea

*Other fruits and vegetables are helpful as well; these are among the most “potent.”

Source: *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 348, Pgs. 109 & 163

Junk food

Foods such as sodas, sweets, and chips account for nearly one-third of the calories Americans eat.

When 4,700 people reported all the foods they ate in the previous 24 hours, sweets topped the list, followed by hamburgers, pizza, and potato chips. Sodas alone contributed over 7% of the total calories consumed.

By comparison, such healthy foods as fruits and vegetables make up only about 10% of the calories we eat.

As a result, Americans tend to be overfed (i.e., overweight) and undernourished.

Source: *University of California, Berkeley survey of 4,700 adults*

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Go nuts!

Nuts are a healthy addition to your diet — as long as you eat them in moderation. (They're high in calories.)

Nuts are especially heart-healthy because they:

- **Are high** in the amino acid arginine, which relaxes blood vessels.
- **Contain** heart-healthy fats.
- **Contain** vitamin E, which helps prevent oxidation of cholesterol.
- **Contain** folate, which lowers homocysteine. (High levels of this substance are a strong predictor of heart disease.)
- **Contain** calcium, magnesium, and potassium, which help keep blood pressure at healthy levels.



BRAZIL NUTS — Three to four Brazil nuts boast 420 mcg of selenium. Also a good source of calcium and magnesium.

CASHEWS — Lower in fat and calories than most nuts (dry-roasted) and contain the most iron. Also a good source of magnesium and phytosterols, which help keep arteries clear.

HAZELNUTS (or filberts) — A higher level of heart-healthy monounsaturated fat than other nuts. Also more folate and a good source of vitamin E.

PISTACHIOS — As high in protein as almonds, but low (for nuts) in calories and fat. A great source of potassium and phytosterols.

WALNUTS — A good source of cancer-fighting ellagic acid and folate. Also rich in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

Editor's note: Peanuts — though they are a legume, not a true nut — can be a nutritious addition to your diet as well.

But they also have a reputation for triggering severe allergic reactions in some people. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that no child under three be given peanut products, just to be safe.

Source: *Natural Health*, Vol. 32, No. 6

A NUTRITION PROFILE

ALMONDS — More fiber than any other nut. Tied with pistachios for highest protein content and contain more arginine than other nuts. Also a good source of calcium, magnesium, and vitamin E.

EATING-WELL RECIPE

Smoked salmon party dip

- 1 cup nonfat cottage cheese
- 1 cup nonfat sour cream
- 4 oz. (½ cup) smoked salmon, chopped
- 4 green onions, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- 1 medium red cabbage
- 8 leaves curly leaf lettuce
- ¼ tsp. paprika
- 2 each, green, red, and yellow bell peppers, cut into 1-inch strips

Purée cottage cheese in food processor or blender until smooth. Scrape into medium bowl. Stir in next five ingredients for dip. Cover and refrigerate.

To make cabbage bowl, trim core end of cabbage to sit flat. Starting at top, hollow out the cabbage with a sharp knife and spoon. Line a platter with lettuce leaves. Place cabbage in center, fill with dip, and sprinkle with paprika.

Arrange pepper strips around the cabbage. Serves 20. Per 2 Tbsp. serving: 37 calories, 4 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat, 1 g fiber, and 98 mg sodium.

Source: Reprinted with permission from *The New American Heart Association Cookbook*, Time Books, a division of Random House, 1998. Available in bookstores.

Sweet (calcium) treat

Looking for a sweet way to help meet your daily calcium requirement of 1,000 mg to 1,300 mg?

Try figs. Two plump ones contain about 60 mg of bone-building calcium — plus 5 grams of important fiber. There are about 120 calories in two large figs.

Source: *Bowes & Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used*



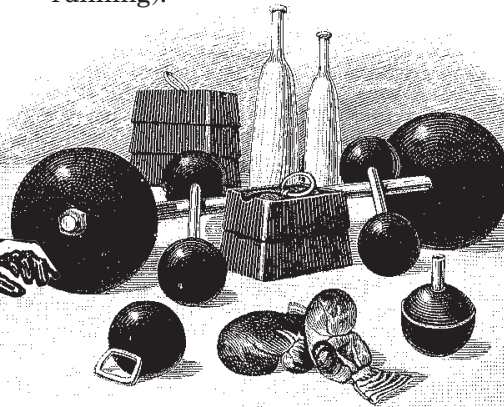
Everyone needs strong muscles



- **Weight training means lifting free weights** such as dumbbells, working out on weight machines, or working against other types of resistance (e.g., elastic bands).
- **Strength training can't turn fat into muscle**, but it can burn calories and help you shed body fat.

A 30-minute workout burns about 200 calories.
- **Strength training builds muscles**, and muscle burns more calories than fat.
- **Strength training** helps increase bone density.
- **Strength training should be used** in addition to aerobic exercise (e.g., walking, swimming, running).

- **Just two or three 15- to 20-minute** strength-training sessions a week can give you benefits.
- **Strong muscles not only improve** athletic performance, but quality of life in general. Whether you're carrying a child or a bag of groceries, strong muscles make it just that much easier (and help prevent injury).
- **It's never too late to start.** Studies have shown that even 90-year-olds can improve their quality of life with strength training.



WORKOUT TIPS

- **Start slowly** with light weights. Gradually increase repetitions, as well as weight.
- **One "set"** consists of 8 to 15 repetitions. Doing one set is good, but you'll get more benefit if you work up to two or three sets. Rest for a minute in between.
- **Work slowly and smoothly** — especially as you lower the weights.
- **Exhale while you lift** and inhale as you lower the weights.
- **Be sure** you tax your muscles. But don't overdo it.
- **If you feel breathless** or exhausted, stop. Mild discomfort or awareness that you're exerting yourself is okay.

Fast fact

Longer, moderately paced daily walks (40 minutes at 60% to 65% maximum heart rate) are best for losing weight.

Shorter, faster walks (20 to 25 minutes at 75% to 85% maximum heart rate) are best for conditioning your heart and lungs.

Source: American Podiatric Medical Association

The exercise habit

Until something becomes a habit, it's easy to ignore it.

Here are two ways to help make exercise a daily habit:

1. Find an activity that you enjoy. It can be as simple as a brisk daily walk through a nearby park, or as ambitious as scaling mountains.
2. Recruit someone who will do these activities with you. The moral support will keep you going on days when you might otherwise be tempted to slack off.



Research news

yo-yo dieting

♥ **Losing weight is good, but losing and regaining weight** over and over may damage the immune system, say researchers.

Women who had dieted and lost 10 or more pounds at least once in the previous 20 years showed lower levels of natural killer cells — immune system cells that help fight viruses, and possibly cancer as well.

Women who had yo-yo'd most often — five times or more — had the lowest levels of natural killer cells.

Researchers don't recommend that women stop trying to lose weight. But rather, that they learn to adopt overall healthy eating habits that they can be comfortable with in the long run.

Source: *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, Vol. 104, Pg. 903

drug-induced bone loss

♥ **Using anti-epileptic drugs (AED) appears to accelerate bone loss in elderly women.**

Over a five-year period, continuous use of these drugs increased the risk of a broken hip by 29%, say researchers.

The AEDs studied were older drugs, including Dilantin, phenobarbital, and Tegretol. Researchers don't yet know if the newer AEDs have the same effect on bones.

If you must take anti-epileptic drugs, make sure you are screened for osteoporosis, and get appropriate treatment if your bones are thinning.

Source: *Neurology*, Vol. 62, Pg. 2051

antibacterial cleaners

♥ **If you expect antibacterial cleaning products to keep you healthier, think again.**

In one study, researchers couldn't find any difference in the incidence of illness between groups of people who used antibacterial products and those who did not.

One reason for this is that many illnesses are caused by viruses — and antibacterial products can't kill a virus.

Many experts also question the wisdom of using antibacterial cleaners because they may help breed antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Source: *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 140, Pg. 321

liposuction & weight loss

♥ **Removing 20 pounds of fat with liposuction might help you feel a little better** about how you look, but it won't make you healthier, say researchers.

In women who had 20 pounds of surface fat removed through liposuction, metabolic abnormalities associated with obesity (e.g., inflammation, unhealthy cholesterol, high blood pressure, and high insulin and blood sugar levels) did not improve.

But when women lost 20 pounds of fat through diet and exercise, they saw improvement in all these metabolic abnormalities.

Bottom line: Losing weight through diet and exercise seems to be the only way to improve unhealthy cholesterol numbers, high blood pressure, and high insulin and blood sugar levels — all of which are risk factors for diabetes and heart disease.

Source: *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 350, Pg. 2549

appetite

♥ **Consuming too much fructose — a sugar found in corn syrup, honey, and fruit** — may change levels of hormones that help regulate appetite, say researchers.

The net result: You may still feel hungry after eating high-fructose foods. This could promote overeating, researchers theorize.

The principal "appetite" hormones studied were leptin and ghrelin. Fructose tends to keep leptin levels low. This is the hormone that lets people know they are full. At the same time, fructose also triggers high levels of ghrelin, a hormone that stimulates eating.

Fructose is a natural molecule, and there's nothing wrong with eating it in moderate amounts, say the authors of this study.

The problem is that Americans are consuming very large quantities of high-fructose corn syrup — a common sweetener used in many products, including soft drinks.

Sources: *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, Vol. 89, Pg. 2963

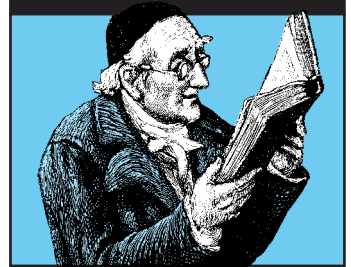
American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Vol. 79, Pg. 537

colorectal cancer

♥ **Drinking more than two alcoholic drinks daily** appears to increase the risk for colorectal cancer.

Source: *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 140, Pg. 603

FROM LEADING PUBLICATIONS AND AUTHORITIES...



trans fat & heart disease

♥ **The more hydrogenated oils (trans fats) you consume, the higher your "bad" LDL cholesterol will climb.**

And if that weren't bad enough, the size of those LDL particles also gets smaller. The *smaller* your LDL particles, the *higher* your heart-disease risk.

In one experiment, people ate five different kinds of fat — ranging from little trans fat (butter) to high in trans fats (stick margarine). With the butter, their LDL particles were large. When they switched to highly hydrogenated fats like shortening and stick margarine, the size of their LDL particles decreased.

What this means: A diet high in trans fats (hydrogenated oils) will result in a rise in small LDL particles. Over time, this significantly increases the risk of heart disease.

Besides hardened margarines and shortening, trans fats are found in store-bought processed foods (like cookies and crackers) and deep-fried foods.

Source: *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Vol. 78, Pg. 370



...you can use!

exercise & bones

♥ **Exercise — the weight-bearing kind like running, walking, or weight-lifting** — may be one of the most important things young girls can do to develop strong bones, say researchers.

In fact, it may even have more effect on bone mass than calcium intake, according to one study.

A woman's bone mass is built mostly during her teen years.

Source: Research from Pennsylvania State University's Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

birth defects

♥ **Women who are obese when they become pregnant** are more likely to have babies with various birth defects than women of healthy weights.

Plus, simply being overweight (not obese) at conception seems to increase the risk of having a child with heart defects or more than one unrelated birth defect.

Researchers aren't sure why.

Source: Pediatrics, Vol. 111, Pg. 1152



caffeine & diabetes

♥ **Researchers say that people with type 2 diabetes who have caffeine with their meals** may see their blood sugar and insulin levels rise to unhealthy levels.

Though the study was small, researchers found that when type 2 diabetics were given caffeine with a meal, their blood sugar rose 21% and their insulin rose 48% higher than usual.

Since the goal of anyone with diabetes is to keep blood sugar levels down, researchers urge diabetics to reduce or eliminate caffeine from their diets — or at least not drink coffee with their meals.

Source: Diabetes Care, Vol. 27, Pg. 2047

What children need

- **Support.** Parents need to show that they love their children and will stand by them, no matter what.
- **Empowerment.** Parents need to make it clear that children, especially their own, are valued and valuable for who they truly are.
- **Boundaries and expectations.** Parents need to have high — yet realistic — expectations for their children, and set clear limits for their behavior.
- **Constructive use of time.** Parents need to help their children balance school activities, time with friends, and time at home.
- **Commitment to learning.** Parents need to encourage — and model — a love of learning.
- **Positive values.** Parents need to talk about — and model — basic values such as honesty, trust, and responsibility.
- **Social competence.** Parents need to instill in their children an interest in — and comfort with — other people. They also need to help them develop the skills that allow them to relate respectfully to everyone.
- **Positive identity.** Parents need to nurture their children's self-esteem, feeling of control over their own lives, and sense of hope.

Source: Search Institute, Minneapolis (www.search-institute.org)

How to stay young

1. **Keep only cheerful friends.** The grouches pull you down.
2. **Keep learning.** Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
3. **Enjoy the simple things.**
4. **Laugh often,** long, and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
5. **Tears happen.** Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with you your entire life is you. Be ALIVE while you are alive.
6. **Surround yourself** with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
7. **Cherish your health.** If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, work to improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
8. **Don't take guilt trips.** Take a trip to the mall, to the next county, to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.
9. **Tell the people you love** that you love them — at every opportunity.
10. **Don't sweat** the little things.
11. **And remember,** there's no way you can look as bad as that person on your driver's license!

Source: Unknown

quitting smoking

♥ **If you are planning to quit smoking, you might want to do it all at once** instead of tapering the number of cigarettes you smoke in a day.

Here's why: Researchers say that women who cut their cigarette use in half actually boosted their intake of smoke, carbon monoxide, nicotine, and other cancer-causing chemicals.

It seems that people quickly change the way they smoke to compensate for smoking fewer cigarettes. For example, they take deeper drags and smoke more of the cigarette before putting it out.

In other words, they become more efficient smokers.

Source: Ohio State University research

The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your health-care providers, not to replace it.

Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

Articles written by outside contributors have not been reviewed by the Hope Health Medical Advisory Board.



Things you can do to sleep better

- **Exercise during the day.** Exercise is also a natural stress-reliever.
- **Keep your bedroom** at a comfortable sleeping temperature.
- **Follow a pre-sleep ritual** (i.e., brushing your teeth, reading in bed, etc.).
- **Try to go to bed and get up** about the same time every day, including weekends.
- **Limit your “bed” activities** to sleep. Don't use the bed as your second office, or where you watch most of your TV.
- **Give yourself some “worrying” time** during the day so you won't do it at night.
- **Don't eat a heavy meal** too close to bedtime, especially one that might cause you heartburn. (If you do get heartburn, prop yourself up with several pillows — or raise the bed slightly — to let gravity do its work.)
- **Stay away from alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine** several hours before bedtime. Alcohol will *disrupt* your sleep, and caffeine and nicotine are stimulants that



will *prevent* you from falling asleep.

- **Make sure your mattress, pillow, and sleepwear** are all comfortable.
- If you are waking up with a sore or stiff neck, you might want to try a specially shaped cervical pillow that allows your back, neck and head to stay aligned (in a neutral position) throughout the night.
- **Wear ear plugs or a sleeping mask** to block out light and noise.

Sources: National Sleep Foundation; *Sleep Thieves*, by Stanley Coren, neuropsychologist and sleep researcher, University of British Columbia

Key to good health care

“All doctors have weaknesses. Even the very best ones can make mistakes. Since no doctor can know it all, none should be trusted blindly.

If you understand your doctor's limitations, scrutinize his or her advice, and play an active role in decision-making, you can enjoy excellent medical care from less-than-perfect physicians.”

— *Examining Your Doctor* by Timothy B. McCall, MD

How to take a pill

Many people believe that if you tilt your head back to swallow a pill, you'll have a better shot at getting the pill down your throat.

But the fact is, this is the least effective way to take a pill. That's because it also allows the pill unguarded access to your windpipe, where it can cut off your air supply. Tilting your head back is what paramedics do to open a blocked airway.

The safest way to swallow a pill is to tilt your head forward so that your chin almost touches your chest. That way, the pill can't get into your windpipe. And you're less likely to gag.

Another good idea: Take only one pill at a time. An extra-big swallow of liquid will also help things go down a little easier.

Source: *NutritionNewsFocus.com*

Blood pressure spikers

Most people know that salt can sometimes cause blood pressure to spike.

But there are other substances that can cause blood pressure to rise. Among them:

- **Caffeine** — in coffee, tea, some soft drinks, and some medications.
- **Licorice** — consumed in large amounts.
- **Phenylalanine** — used in sugar-free foods that contain aspartame (e.g., Nutra-Sweet, Equal).
- **Alcohol** — more than one glass of wine or 24 oz. of beer.
- **Decongestants** — found in cold and cough remedies (e.g., pseudoephedrine, phenylpropanolamine, dextromethorphan).
- **Appetite suppressants** — found in many weight-reducing supplements (e.g., diethylpropion).

Source: *The Pocket Guide to Low-Sodium Foods*, by Bobbie Mostyn, Indata Group Inc., Olympia, WA

10 great things about meditation

1. **It can boost** your immune system.
2. **It can help** lower blood pressure.
3. **It can help** control pain.
4. **It stimulates** the parts of the brain that control emotions like happiness and optimism.
5. **It's easy** and convenient. You can do it almost anywhere, anytime.
6. **You don't need** an appointment.
7. **You don't need** to worry about whether your health insurance will pay for it.
8. **It's inexpensive.**
9. **You don't need** any special equipment, although there is a huge industry devoted to selling books and videos that will teach you how to meditate.
10. **It can provide** health benefits without anyone sticking needles into you, manipulating your spine, or prescribing pills for you.



HOW TOs

There are hundreds of ways to meditate, and no single right way.

- **A teacher can show you** the basics, but then it's up to you to make a commitment to daily practice. As little as 10 minutes a day can make a difference.
- **If you want to start on your own**, find a place that is quiet and comfortable. This will set up a cue to your body that it is time to meditate.
- **Sit comfortably**, either straight- or cross-legged, on the floor or a cushion, or in a chair with your back straight and your feet on the floor. Close or half-close your eyes and gaze downward.
- **Pick a calming phrase**, a word, or a short prayer to say over and over. Or concentrate on a calming color or an image like a pebble dropping into still water. The goal is to find something that quiets your mind.
- **Take normal, deep breaths**, gently noticing when you breathe in and out.
- **If distracting thoughts come to mind**, just notice them. Don't make judgments or be self-critical. Expect them to come and go. Then continue with your meditation.
- **Stop meditating slowly**. Gradually open your eyes and become aware of your surroundings.

COMMON-SENSE STRESS-RELIEVERS

- **Do things simply.**
- **What you focus on** becomes your life.
- **If what you're doing** isn't working, try something else.
- **Work smarter**, not harder.
- **Be less busy** and more effective.
- **Challenge yourself** to slow down and be more productive.
- **Learn something** from someone with whom you disagree.

SIDEWALK ETIQUETTE

There's road rage and airplane rage. And there's even "pavement rage."

Pavement rage happens when people want to get quickly to their destination but are delayed by slower-moving pedestrians on the sidewalk.

Solution: It's healthy to be a fast walker, so don't give that up. But do exercise some patience. Will it really make any difference if you arrive at your destination 15 seconds later?

For all the slower walkers out there, try to keep to the right. And don't block the entire sidewalk by walking three or more abreast.

Laughter

“Laughter is to life what shock absorbers are to automobiles.

It won't take the potholes out of the road, but it sure makes the ride smoother.”

— Barbara Johnson



your health matters

this 'n' that

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

About 36% of U.S. adults use some form of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM).

Among the 27 types of CAM therapies commonly used in the U.S. are acupuncture, chiropractic, herbs and botanicals, vitamins, and special diets.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

ON BEING SICK

“If you treat a sick child like an adult and a sick adult like a child, everything usually works out pretty well.”

— Ruth Carlisle

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Exercise = health-care savings

In one study of Detroit auto workers, researchers found that annual health-care costs averaged \$2,200 for normal weight people, \$2,400 for the overweight, and \$2,700 for those who were obese.

But among workers who did *not* exercise, health-care costs shot up by at least \$100 a year, and were \$3,000 a year for sedentary obese employees.

Adding two or more days of light exercise lowered costs by an average of \$500 per employee per year — even if they didn't lose any weight.

Bottom line: If more people included a half-hour to an hour of exercise in their daily routines, America might be able to help curb its rising health-care costs, say researchers.

Source: *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, Vol. 46, Pg. 428



body, mind, and soul

“An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.”

— Bill Vaughan

“If someone were to pay you 10 cents for every kind word you ever spoke and collect 5 cents for every unkind word, would you be rich or poor?”

— Unknown

“Striving for excellence motivates you. Striving for perfection is demoralizing.”

— Harriet Braiker

“Enjoy your own life without comparing it with that of another.”

— Marquis de Condorcet

“The trouble with being punctual is that there's nobody there to appreciate it.”

— Franklin P. Jones

“Tact is rubbing out another's mistake instead of rubbing it in.”

— Unknown

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