



MOUNTAIN STATES

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VOL. 29, NO. 12

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

DECEMBER 2009

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DEPRESSION VS. SADNESS

When is blue too blue?

It's normal to feel sadness or grief when a loved one dies or you go through a divorce, an economic setback, or the death of a pet. Extra stress, extra spending, and unmet expectations can even trigger a mild case of depression often described as the “holiday blues.”

When an occasional bad day stretches into two weeks or longer, however, clinical depression may be the cause. Unlike grief, which can lead to healing, depression is destructive. It interferes with day-to-day living and can include lack of energy, problems in thinking, and an overall feeling of despair and hopelessness. A biological reason such as hormonal changes is also often to blame.

Exercise, a healthy diet, and keeping your sense of humor can help if the holiday blues hit you head on. When symptoms of depression are severe and ongoing, however, it's time to talk to your doctor about possible forms of treatment.

Source: You Can Beat Depression: A Guide to Prevention & Recovery, 4th edition, by Dr. John Preston, Impact Publishers

What's on your shopping list?

Spending your extra money on experiences — like going out for a meal or buying tickets to a sporting event — may make you happier than buying things. Donating money to charity or buying gifts for others also appears to make people happier than buying things for themselves. At least those were the findings from a pair of recent studies.

In both studies, the relationship between feelings of happiness and how the money was spent was the same for people of all income levels.

Sources: Science, Vol. 319, pg. 1687; Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Annual Meeting 2009

Avoid winter falls



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FROM ACORN TO ZUCCHINI

Squash is a vegetable for all seasons

Whether you choose winter or summer squash, this colorful vegetable makes a hearty and nutritious side dish.

WINTER SQUASH

Winter squash is packed with alpha and beta carotene, antioxidants that contribute to forming vitamin A. Most varieties are also high in vitamin C, potassium, and fiber.

The thick, inedible skin lets winter squash last for months without any special care. Just store them in a cool, dark place. Keeping them in the

refrigerator will shorten life. Some of the best-tasting varieties are:

Acorn — resemble huge acorns; dark green skin with yellow speckles; sweet, nutty flavor.

Butternut — large; cream-colored and shaped like a pear; sweet flavor.

Delicata — light green to cream-colored skin with green stripes down the sides; tastes like a sweet potato when cooked.

Spaghetti squash — large; cream-colored skin; sweet flavor and long, stringy flesh make it a good substitute for its namesake.

SUMMER SQUASH

Zucchini, crookneck squash, and crown-shaped petit pans are the most popular varieties. Summer squash is very low in calories and a good source of vitamin A, potassium, and fiber. The thin, edible skins contain most of the food value.

Since they're similar in flavor, the different varieties of summer squash are interchangeable in recipes. Summer squash will keep for about a week if stored unwashed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Sources: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov; *World's Healthiest Foods*

Cranberry Stuffed Squash

- 3 acorn squash
- 2 cups minced onions
- 1 cup minced celery
- 1 tsp. cooking liquid (broth, water, apple juice)
- 3 cups fresh cranberries
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 2 tsp. freshly grated orange peel
- Juice of 1 orange (about 1/2 cup)
- 1/2 cup pure maple syrup, or to taste

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Slice each squash in half lengthwise and remove the seeds. Place cut side down, in a large flat-bottomed baking pan, and add water to about 1/2 inch. Cover and bake for 30 minutes. Sauté the onions and celery on medium heat in the cooking liquid, stirring often until softened. Add the cranberries and salt, lower the heat, and simmer until the cranberries have popped, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the applesauce, orange peel, and orange juice, and then add just enough maple syrup to offset the sourness of the cranberries. Remove the squash from the oven and turn the halves over in the pan. Fill each cavity with a rounded 1/2 cup of the filling. Bake, uncovered, 30-35 minutes, until well done.

Serves 6. Per serving: 230 calories, 3 g protein, 59 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 5 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 223 mg sodium.

"Bounce Berries"

Cranberries are ranked among the top 10 antioxidant foods — and a 1/2-cup serving provides 10% of the daily requirements for vitamin C.

Good ripe cranberries will bounce, which is why they are nicknamed bounce berries. When stored in a tightly sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator, fresh cranberries may last up to two months. Cook them only until their skins pop. Overcooking gives them a bitter taste.

Source: *U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention*

fitness

NOW'S THE TIME TO

Trade your running shoes for snowshoes

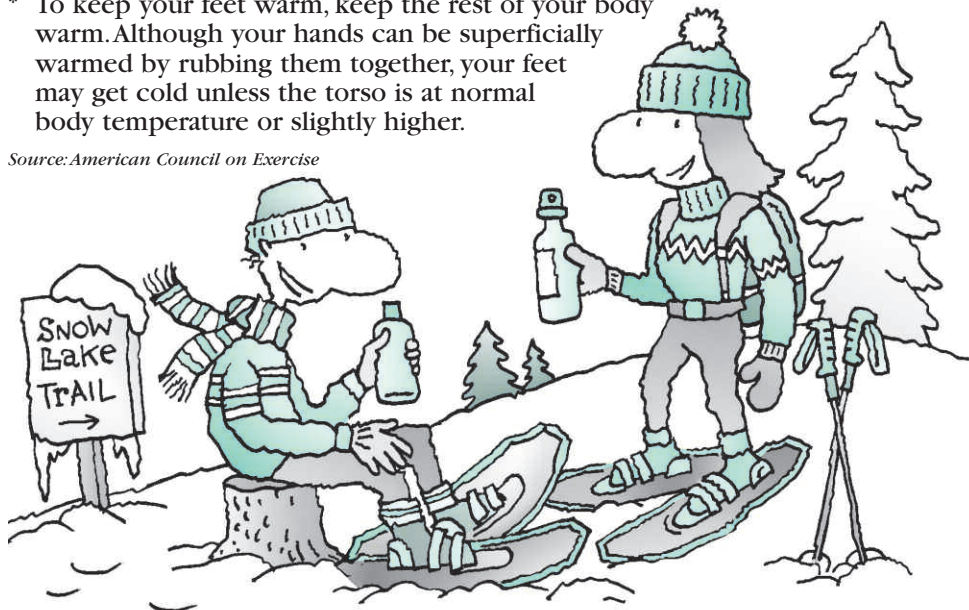
Snowshoeing is a low-stress, low-impact activity that most people can do at any age or fitness level.

Even at slower paces, snowshoeing gets your heart pumping and burns approximately the same number of calories as jogging.

Tips for exercising in the cold:

- * Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- * Wear sunscreen and sunglasses.
- * Dress in layers that can be removed as your body warms up.
- * Always wear a hat.
- * Wear clothes made from fabrics that “wick” or draw moisture away from your body. Avoid cotton and tightly woven materials.
- * To keep your feet warm, keep the rest of your body warm. Although your hands can be superficially warmed by rubbing them together, your feet may get cold unless the torso is at normal body temperature or slightly higher.

Source: American Council on Exercise



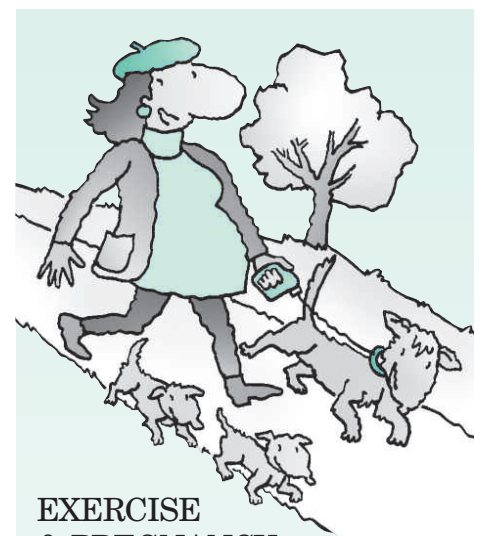
WINTER RIDING

Get the benefits of biking without going outside

“Cycle trainers” and “cycle rollers” can turn your regular bike into a stationary bike.

The trainers allow you to remove your bike’s front wheel and place the back wheel into a mount that elevates the bike and keeps it stable. You can also adjust the difficulty of resistance. Most bicycle and sporting equipment stores carry cycle trainers in a wide range of styles and prices.

With the cycle rollers, both the front and back wheels stay on and no part of the bicycle is attached to the rollers. Although they feel more like actual riding, rollers are harder to use and require more balance and concentration. With either the bicycle trainer or roller, you may want to put a tarp down to protect the floor or carpet.



EXERCISE & PREGNANCY

Why moms-to-be need to keep moving

Pregnant women who exercise regularly can reduce their risk for gestational diabetes and may have an easier time with labor and a quicker recovery from delivery. Other benefits include better mood; more energy; and reduced backaches, constipation, bloating, swelling, and risk of excessive weight gain.

Experts recommend 30 minutes of safe, moderate activity most days of the week for pregnant women, but only after they have checked with their doctor to make sure it’s OK.

Swimming, walking, cycling, moderate aerobics or dancing, and yoga are generally considered safe. Avoid scuba diving and contact sports like basketball and soccer as well as horseback riding, gymnastics, and other activities that have an increased risk for falling.

More points for exercising during pregnancy:

More points for exercising during pregnancy:

- Avoid exercising to the point of breathlessness or exhaustion, as that could affect the baby’s supply of oxygen.
- Avoid overheating and exercising outdoors in hot weather.
- After the first trimester, avoid activities that involve lying on your back.

Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, www.acog.org; American Pregnancy Association, www.americanpregnancy.org

POWER TO THE PATIENT

Tired of being tired?

“I have no energy.” “I’m tired all the time.” These are among my patients’ most common complaints. Sometimes it’s a symptom of a heart or lung condition, anemia, low levels of thyroid hormone, depression, or other physical reasons. For many of these patients, however, the long list of conditions producing fatigue can be ruled out, leaving us with the mystery of why they are tired.

There’s an old adage in medicine: “When you hear hoof beats in the distance, think horses, not zebras.” The “horse” — in this case, the most common explanation for being tired — is too little sleep. Most adults need 7–9 hours of sleep per night. What can you do to help ensure you get enough sleep?

1. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning.
2. Avoid alcohol, large meals, and drinking liquids close to bedtime.
3. Avoid physical activity or caffeine within a few hours of bedtime.
4. Make your bedroom relaxing, dark, and quiet.
5. Use your bed only for sleep and sex.

These tips can help you achieve and maintain a good sleep, and you may find you have a lot less fatigue and a lot more energy to make the most of your day.

William J. Mayer, MD, MPH
Medical Editor

Do you have a subject you would like the doctor to discuss? E-mail DocTalk@HopeHealth.com.



Sugar’s many disguises

Sucrose is the chemical name for sugar, but glucose, dextrose, fructose, lactose, and maltose are also forms of sugar.

That’s why it’s important to read nutrition labels carefully, especially for people with diabetes and pre-diabetes who are trying to limit their carbohydrate intake to manage blood glucose levels.

Other sweeteners that are high in sugar and can raise blood sugar levels include high-fructose corn syrup, corn sweetener or solids, dehydrated cane juice, concentrated fruit juices, molasses, honey, maple syrup, and agave nectar.

Source: American Diabetes Association

Log on to quit smoking

You can improve your chances for success if you use an online program to quit smoking.

An analysis of 22 studies found that the percentage of smokers who remained tobacco free a year after using an online quit program was almost twice as high as for those who tried to quit on their own.

Free online help is available through the American Lung Association’s Freedom From Smoking site at www.ffsonline.org.

Sources: Archives of Internal Medicine, Vol. 169, pg. 929; American Lung Association



Never exercise to the point of pain. If something hurts, don’t do it.

Health

Health Briefs for Busy People

What to do about dry mouth

Sugar-free candy or gum can increase saliva for dry mouth sufferers. Your dentist may also be able to recommend a toothpaste or an oral rinse that can increase saliva production. (Read labels carefully to avoid hidden sugars in breath mints and chewable antacids and vitamins.)

People with diabetes, the elderly, and those taking certain medications like diuretics for high blood pressure are more likely to have dry mouth, which can increase your risk for tooth decay. Limiting caffeine, salty foods, citrus juices, and not smoking may also help curb dry mouth.

Sources: Healthy Living With Diabetes, Spring 2009; American Dental Association

A triple play against cancer

Even people who have a family history of cancer can lower their risk for developing the disease by taking these three steps:

- Eat a plant-based diet built around fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Maintain a healthy weight and avoid weight gain during adulthood.
- Aim for at least 30 to 60 minutes of daily exercise.

“The data is pretty clear that we can prevent about one-third of all cancers with these changes,” says Karen Collins, a nutrition advisor for the American Institute of Cancer Research. “If you add not smoking or using other tobacco products, over half of today’s cancers could be prevented.”

Source: Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective, by the American Institute for Cancer Research and the World Cancer Research Fund

Take notes

Whenever you visit the doctor, take a pen and paper with you.

If your physician writes you a prescription, ask him or her to spell the name of the medication. You can then write it down clearly, along with the directions for correct dosage and when to take it.

Double check your notes with the label on the prescription when you pick it up at the pharmacy.

Start early

Try to shovel snow as soon as it falls. Packed snow is heavier and will put more strain on your back.

Other safety tips: Stretch your arms, back, and legs before you start shoveling. Use a small shovel and push the snow instead of flinging it. Lift with your legs and bend with your knees, not at the waist. Go slowly so your heart rate and blood pressure don't spike.

Talk to your doctor before shoveling snow if you are inactive or have a history of heart trouble.

Sources: North Dakota State University Extension Service; American Association of Retired People

Escape from the kitchen

A little organization and advance planning can keep you from getting stuck in the kitchen during holiday gatherings.

Prepare soups and casseroles that can be frozen and then cooked the day you serve them.

Bake pies, breads, and other items that need to be cooled ahead of time so your oven will be free for cooking meats and other dishes that are generally served hot.

Set the table the day before.

Enlist volunteers to take turns watching the kitchen while you spend time with your family and guests.

Source: American Dietetic Association, www.eatright.org

FISCAL FITNESS

OVERWHELMED BY DEBT?

How to preserve your credit rating

If you find it difficult to pay your loans and credit card bills on time, taking steps like these may help protect your credit score:

- **Before you miss a payment,** contact the lender by phone. You may be able to negotiate a financial hardship plan for a limited time.
- **If you can only pay a portion of the bill,** still contact the lender. Partial payments will reduce calls from bill collectors and minimize harm to your credit score.
- **Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help.** The National Foundation for Credit Counseling (1-800-388-2227) is a reliable nonprofit service.
- **If you're facing repossession on a big item like your car,** try selling it yourself to pay off the loan. If a lender repossesses the car, you'll still be responsible for any difference between what the bank gets for selling your car and the balance you still owe.
- **Try to raise some quick cash that you can put toward paying your bills.** Look for things in your house or garage that you no longer use. You may be able to sell them by having a garage sale or listing them on a free want-ad site.

Source: National Endowment for Financial Education, www.SmartAboutMoney.org/SurvivalTips



Tight ends vs. tuba players

The high school marching band could be a great exercise option for musically inclined teens.

The physical demands and fitness benefits of playing in a competitive marching band are similar to those gained by athletes who participate in sports, says Gary Grant, PhD, RD, a researcher for the American College of Sports Medicine.

Performers are constantly moving, and often running, at speeds that reach 180 steps or more per minute while playing instruments that weigh up to 40 pounds.

Source: American College of Sports Medicine

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.

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safety

ICE & SNOW

High- and low-tech ways to avoid winter falls

Whether you're heading for the mountains or just the mailbox, you can take some steps to prevent winter falls.

- **Before it freezes, cover surfaces around your home** with de-icer, rock salt, sand, or kitty litter. Carry a small bag in your car or pocket to sprinkle on patches of ice when you find them.
- **Look out for broken paving or cracked sidewalks.** If a surface looks slippery, try to walk on the grass.
- **Wear proper-fitting boots or shoes** with wide, low heels and rubber soles, not smooth leather.
- **Snow and ice cleats that fit over your boots and shoes will grip** the ice and give you the most traction. Make sure they are easy to put on and take off before purchasing a pair.
- **Carry a flashlight.** It will make it easier for you to see and make you more visible to passing drivers.
- **Walk flat footed,** not on your toes, lengthen your stride and give yourself extra time.

If you do find someone who has fallen outdoors and can't get back on their feet, call 911. Don't try to move them. Keep them as warm as possible and stay with them until help arrives.

Sources: Kansas State Research and Extension; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Kansas City, Missouri, Health Department



Protect your feet by wearing flip-flops instead of walking barefoot in public pool areas, locker rooms, and hotel rooms.

stress less

PEACEKEEPERS

Getting your kids to cooperate

Be specific about what you expect, like having your child make the bed and put away toys every day. Questions that start with "Will you please?" can make it sound like they have a choice. Instead, present options such as "Do you want to put away your toys or make your bed first?"

Establish priorities so that your child understands the time sequence in which things happen: "As soon as you've finished the dishes, you can go outside and ride your bike."

Replace yelling with consequences. If a bike gets left in the driveway, put the bike in a "time out" during which the child is not allowed to ride it. Always be aware of feelings. It hurts when someone yells at you.

Make eye contact. Get down to your child's level, and avoid shouting across the room.

Identify the times you're most likely to yell, whether it's getting out of the house in the morning or going to bed. Create a routine to make it less stressful.

Source: *Kid Cooperation: How to Stop Yelling, Nagging and Pleading and Get Kids to Cooperate*, by Elizabeth Pantley, New Harbinger Publications



The power of gratitude

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.

It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”

— Melody Beattie

take care

DON'T WAIT

Major strokes often follow mini strokes

Get medical attention immediately for any signs of stroke. Although TIAs (Transient Ischemic Attacks) that have the same symptoms of stroke can sometimes go away within five to 10 minutes, they are a warning signal. Nearly half of the people who have a major stroke do so within 24 hours of a TIA.

Emergency medical treatment may help prevent the occurrence of a major stroke. In the case of full-blown stroke, emergency treatment can reduce the risk of permanent brain damage.

STROKE SYMPTOMS

Call 911 if you or someone you're with shows any of these symptoms:

- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding
- Numbness or weakness of the face, arms, or legs, especially on one side
- Sudden trouble seeing with one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Severe headache with no known cause

Sources: *Neurology*, Vol. 71, pg. 1941; American Heart Association

LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE

The real costs of drunk and drugged driving

The costs of driving under the influence don't end with the fatalities, injuries, or disabilities caused by traffic accidents.

People who drive after using drugs or alcohol, and even passengers who ride with them, can face jail time, the loss of a driver's license, higher insurance rates, and additional expenses such as attorney fees, court costs, and lost time at work.

Alcohol-related crashes account for nearly one-third of traffic-related deaths in the U.S., and the annual cost is over \$51 billion.

So remember, if you catch a buzz, catch a ride.

Sources: *National Highway Traffic & Safety Administration*; *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

If you host a holiday party, remind your guests to plan ahead and designate a sober driver. Offer alcohol-free beverages and make sure all of your guests leave with someone who hasn't been drinking. Take the keys or call a taxi for friends who don't have a designated driver.



December Health Observances



Hand-Washing Awareness

The number one principle of hand awareness: Never put your fingers into your eyes, nose, or mouth, the places where germs enter your body.

Other ways to stop the spread of germs that cause illness: Always wash your hands before eating and after using the restroom, and avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands — use a tissue or cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow. Carry alcohol-based hand gel to clean your hands when you don't have soap and water. www.henrythehand.com

Safe Toys and Gifts

The latest information on toys that have been recalled for safety reasons is available at www.safekids.org.

Any toy with parts small enough to fit inside the cardboard tube on a roll of toilet paper is a choking hazard. Toys with strings, straps, or chords longer than 7 inches pose a risk for strangulation.

Toys with magnets, sharp points, edges, or angles, and toys with parts that fly may also be unsafe for certain ages.

HOPE HEALTH LETTER

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weight control

Balancing the scale

Stepping on the scale can give you a good reality check when it comes to weight control.

Participants in one study who weighed themselves every day after losing weight were more successful at keeping it off.

“If you see the numbers on the scale going up, you can use that information to take quick action by eating less or exercising more,” says Dr. Rena Wing, a researcher from Brown University.

Dr. Gary Foster, director of the Temple University Center for Obesity Research and Education, suggests that people weigh at least once a week, and always under the same conditions — preferably in the morning after you’ve used the restroom but before getting dressed.

“Although the scale should not be your ultimate judge, avoiding the scale could mean you’re avoiding yourself and your commitment to staying healthy,” says Foster.

Sources: New England Journal of Medicine, Vol. 355, pg. 1563; Are You Losing It? Losing Weight Without Losing Your Mind



THE RIGHT WAY TO HANDLE **CFL bulbs**

Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulbs contain small amounts of mercury and should be recycled at facilities that handle hazardous household waste. Some retailers will also accept CFL bulbs for disposal.

If a CFL bulb breaks, have people and pets leave the room and open a window. Do not vacuum or sweep up the broken glass. Wear disposable gloves and scoop up the fragments with stiff paper, then wipe the area with a damp paper towel. Use tape to pick up the glass on a carpet. Place the fragments, gloves, paper towel, and tape into a double-sealed plastic bag or glass jar with a metal lid and deliver it to a proper waste disposal site. For detailed instructions, visit www.epa.gov/mercury/spills.

body, mind, & soul

“The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings.”

— Eric Hoffer

“Once again, we come to the holiday season, a deeply religious time that each of us observes, in his own way, by going to the mall of his choice.”

— Dave Barry

“Vegetarians have never been able to explain why the first sin was eating fruit.”

— Unknown

“Honesty pays, but it don’t seem to pay enough to suit some people.”

— Kin Hubbard

“If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, it’s just possible you haven’t grasped the situation.”

— Jean Kerr