

A Healthier You

Compliments of Health Management & Wellness

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Power Down to Power Up



If your bedtime routine includes using your smartphone, e-book device or tablet, you're not alone. After all, when you have so many small gadgets that offer news articles, e-books, games and email access all in one package, it can be tough to power down. If you use your smartphone as an alarm clock, chances are you are literally going to sleep with your phone. You may not realize it, but this could be affecting your sleep in a major way.

- Your bedroom should be a relaxing sanctuary that is suited to rest and relaxation. Using electronic devices to do things like respond to emails and work on projects can make it difficult to relax and get a good night's sleep.
- The light from electronics and phone chargers may prevent your body from producing melatonin, a natural hormone your body creates to regulate sleep.
- Reading a suspenseful novel or playing a game on your device can stimulate your mind and make it difficult for you to relax and be ready for sleep.

Most adults need seven to eight hours of sleep each night. If you have trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep for a prolonged period, contact your health care provider. Your provider can identify any underlying issues and help you get the sleep you need.



Run Away from Your Stress



Let's talk about stress. We all deal with it – whether it comes from inching our way through rush-hour traffic, meeting an impossible deadline or just making it through the demands of juggling multiple commitments. Some stress can be good for keeping you on your toes to help you meet important deadlines. But too much stress can wreak havoc on your health.

The American Psychological Association's 2015 Stress in America Study found that the top four causes of stress are money, work, family responsibilities and health concerns. This can all lead to an unhealthy cycle, because when we're stressed, we tend to fall into habits that have a negative impact on our health, causing even more stress.

So what can you do to reduce stress and find more balance in life? Try releasing some endorphins! Endorphins are feel-good hormones naturally produced in your body. Engaging in physical activity is one of the best ways to get your endorphins going. Aerobic activities that increase your heart rate, such as running and brisk walking, provide a great release of endorphins. You may have even heard people refer to something called a "runner's high" – a state of euphoria often experienced during or after running.

If you're like most people, you may not be up for running a marathon just yet. These tips can help you get started:

- Build up slowly. Start with a 15-20 minute brisk walk three or four times each week.
- Gradually add more time to your walks, or increase your speed.
- Don't be afraid to challenge yourself! If you decide to take up running, start with adding 30-60 second increments throughout your walk.
- Work your way up to 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity five times a week or 15-minute rounds of vigorous intensity activity five times per week, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Involve your family, friends and your pets, too!

The bottom line is, no matter what the cause of your stress, don't just sit there. Run away from your stress!

Asthma and Emotions

Have you ever had asthma symptoms when you've been laughing, crying or experiencing stress? You may be surprised to know that your symptoms might be triggered by emotions and how you express them. Strong emotions such as fear, excitement or anger can affect the way you breathe. Your breathing might be quicker and less regular, and you might take short quick breaths through your mouth. Because this air hasn't passed through your nose, it hasn't been warmed or humidified. When it hits your airways, it's dry and cold. This kind of breathing can trigger asthma symptoms for some people. Anyone with asthma may find that emotions are one of their triggers, but there are certain groups who are more at risk:

- Children are more likely to react quickly to the things that are going on around them. They are often happy one minute, then crying the next. Strong emotional reactions could trigger their symptoms.
- Teenagers are known for their fluctuating emotions and mood swings. Since the part of the brain that controls emotions has not yet fully developed, young people often have a hard time controlling their reactions and how they express them. Teenagers are also experiencing changes in their hormones that can make controlling their emotions more difficult.
- Anyone whose asthma is not well controlled. If you need your rescue inhaler more than two days a week, then your asthma may not be well controlled. If you are taking your daily controller medication as prescribed and are still having asthma symptoms, talk to your health care provider.

Experiencing emotions is part of life, and you can't avoid them, but you can be aware of them. If you know you're going through an emotional time, be aware that it might have an effect on your asthma. Follow your written asthma action plan to help you stay on top of your asthma symptoms. If you don't have one, talk to your health care provider about creating one.

Antibiotics Aren't Always the Answer

A recent study from the CDC found that nearly 30 percent of prescriptions written for antibiotics are not needed. According to the study, overuse of antibiotics is helping to drive a surge in drug-resistant superbugs. "Antibiotics are lifesaving drugs, and if we continue down the road of inappropriate use, we'll lose the most powerful tool we have to fight life-threatening infections," said CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden.

Antibiotics work by fighting off harmful bacteria that are present in the body. It is impossible to kill every bacterium in the body, so every time you use antibiotics, the bacteria that survive become stronger and more resistant to treatment. This means the antibiotic may not work as well the next time.

So, when is it appropriate to use antibiotics? Antibiotics should be used to treat bacterial infections. These include things such as:

- Bladder infections
- Many wound and skin infections, such as staph infections
- Severe sinus infections that last longer than two weeks
- Some ear infections
- Strep throat

If you have a viral infection, such as an upper respiratory infection or a cold, there are many over-the-counter medicines that can provide relief for your symptoms. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated, and get plenty of rest.

You can be proactive and prevent many viral infections by following these tips:

- Think of hand washing as a survival skill. Wash your hands thoroughly, and wash them often.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes, especially without washing your hands first.
- Teach your children not to share food and drinks, such as drinking from the same cup.
- Encourage family members to cover their mouths with a tissue when they cough, and to sneeze into the inside of their elbow to prevent the spread of germs.
- Don't share personal items, such as toiletries, towels and wash cloths.

Keep Diabetes in CHECK

Monitoring your blood sugar levels is an important part of managing your diabetes. But diabetes care doesn't stop there. Keep diabetes in check with these tips:

- Schedule a diabetes care visit with your doctor at least once a year.
During your visit:
 - Review your diabetes care plan, including medicines, nutrition, activity and body mass index (BMI).
 - Get your A1c checked twice a year. On average, your goal should be less than 7 percent.
 - Get an LDL cholesterol blood test. On average, your LDL should be less than 100.
 - Get a urine micro albumin test to monitor your kidney function.
 - Get your blood pressure checked, and keep it under 140/80.
 - Have your doctor check your legs and feet for redness, cracks or sores.
- Schedule a diabetic retinal eye exam at least once a year with an eye care professional.
- Have a dental cleaning every six months.
- Take medications exactly as directed.
- Make healthy food choices and stay active.
- Avoid using tobacco products.
- Get your flu shot every year.

Don't Skip the Dentist

When it comes to your health, it's important to pay attention to the bigger picture. You may not realize it, but regular dental care is important, not only for keeping your teeth and gums healthy, but also for your overall health. This is especially true for certain individuals.

If you have diabetes, gum disease can be more severe, take longer to heal and make it harder to control your blood glucose levels. Studies also show that treating gum disease and inflammation can help prevent heart attacks, strokes, angina and congestive heart failure and might even slow down the hardening of arteries.

Additionally, the American Academy of Periodontology suggests that gum disease may be linked to preterm births, which result in babies with low birth weight.

To make sure you stay in tip-top shape, visit your dentist for regular checkups and cleanings, brush your teeth twice a day with a soft-bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste, floss your teeth every day and tell your dentist if you have tooth pain or have problems chewing.



Be Good to Yourself

You try to do your best to take care of yourself, but sometimes you simply need help. Are you seeing the right doctors and taking the right medications? Are you doing everything you can to keep your symptoms in check? What can you do to simplify your life and manage stress? A health coach can help personalize your plan for better health and help you reach your goals. If you're not already working with a health coach, call us at 855-838-5897 to get started today.

What's Cooking

Try this easy, flavorful salad at your next cookout. With the delicious flavor of in-season tomatoes and fresh herbs, this recipe is sure to be a hit.

Summer Tomato, Onion and Cucumber Salad

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, or more to taste
- 2 medium cucumbers
- 4 medium tomatoes, cut into 1/2 inch wedges
- 1 Vidalia or other sweet onion, halved and very thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh herbs, such as flat-leaf parsley, chives and/or tarragon

Instructions

1. Whisk vinegar, oil, honey, salt and pepper in a large shallow bowl.
2. Remove alternating strips of peel from cucumbers. Slice the cucumbers into thin rounds. Add the cucumber slices, tomatoes and onion to the dressing; gently toss to combine. Let stand at room temperature for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour.
3. Just before serving, add herbs and toss again.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 1/2 cup; Calories 58; Total Fat 3g; Saturated Fat 0g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 202mg; Total Carbohydrates 8g; Dietary Fiber 2g; Protein 1g; Added Sugars 1g, Potassium 264mg
Recipe adapted from www.eatingwell.com

What is Health Coaching?

Health coaching is a voluntary program for members with certain health and wellness concerns. We take a personalized and tailored approach that helps you manage your health and cope with everyday issues so you can meet your health goals.

Our coaches are health care professionals from a variety of backgrounds, including registered nurses, dietitians, respiratory therapists and health educators. They have extensive training and knowledge to help support, guide and motivate you to make healthy lifestyle changes at your own pace.

We understand how difficult it can be to make a lifestyle change and stick to it. Our staff works to ensure you have the information and tools you need to succeed.

Is Health Coaching for Me?

Health coaching is especially helpful for members who:

- Want to know more about managing their health.
- Make frequent emergency room visits.
- Use multiple medications to manage their health.
- Experience frequent hospitalization.



Participant's Bill of Rights

Health coaches respect the wishes of participants and their family members and recognize that participants have RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES, including the:

- Right to know the philosophy and characteristics of the health coaching program.
- Right to have personally identifiable health information shared by the coaching program only in accordance with state and federal law.
- Right to identify a staff member and his or her job title, and to speak with a supervisor of a staff member if requested.
- Right to receive accurate information from the health coaching program.
- Right to receive administrative information about changes in or termination of the health coaching program.
- Right to decline participation, revoke consent or withdraw at any time.
- Responsibility to submit any forms necessary to participate in the program, to the extent the law requires.
- Responsibility to give accurate clinical and contact information and to notify the health coaching program of changes in this information.
- Responsibility to notify your treating providers of your participation in the health coaching program, if applicable.

You Make the Choice

Health coaching is completely voluntary and free. Your decision to participate will not affect your health benefits in any way. If you decide that having a personal health coach is not for you, you can opt out of the program at any time by calling 855-838-5897.

If you have a problem or complaint during your health coaching experience, you can call 855-838-5897 and ask to speak to the program manager. In an emergency, please contact your doctor or call 911.