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DIABETES AND HEARING LOSS

Diabetes may affect hearing. People with diabetes are more than twice as likely as those without the disease to have hearing loss, according to a recent National Institutes of Health study. Overall, more than 40% of people with diabetes in the study had some degree of hearing loss.

“People with diabetes should ask their doctors to check their hearing. This should be routine,” said Sergei Kochkin, PhD, executive director of the Better Hearing Institute. Both vision loss and hearing loss are associated with diabetes.

HealthyLife[®] Letter

Promoting Health. Enhancing Life. Reducing Costs.

Training to choose a personal trainer

A growing demand for personal trainers makes it even more important to check them out first, say Indiana University fitness experts. Bad advice from a poorly trained trainer can cost more than the hefty hourly fee. It can result in unnecessary aches and injuries and derail important health and fitness goals.

Without industry standards, it's up to you to make the most of your relationship with a personal trainer:

- * **Sticker shock?** Expensive rates do not mean a trainer is qualified or smart about fitness. Hourly rates often range from \$40 to \$100 depending on location and services.

- * **Check certification.** Certification means little unless it's current and from a reputable national organization such as the American Council on Exercise, American College of Sports Medicine, National Strength and Conditioning Association, or member organizations of the National Organization of Competency Assurance.

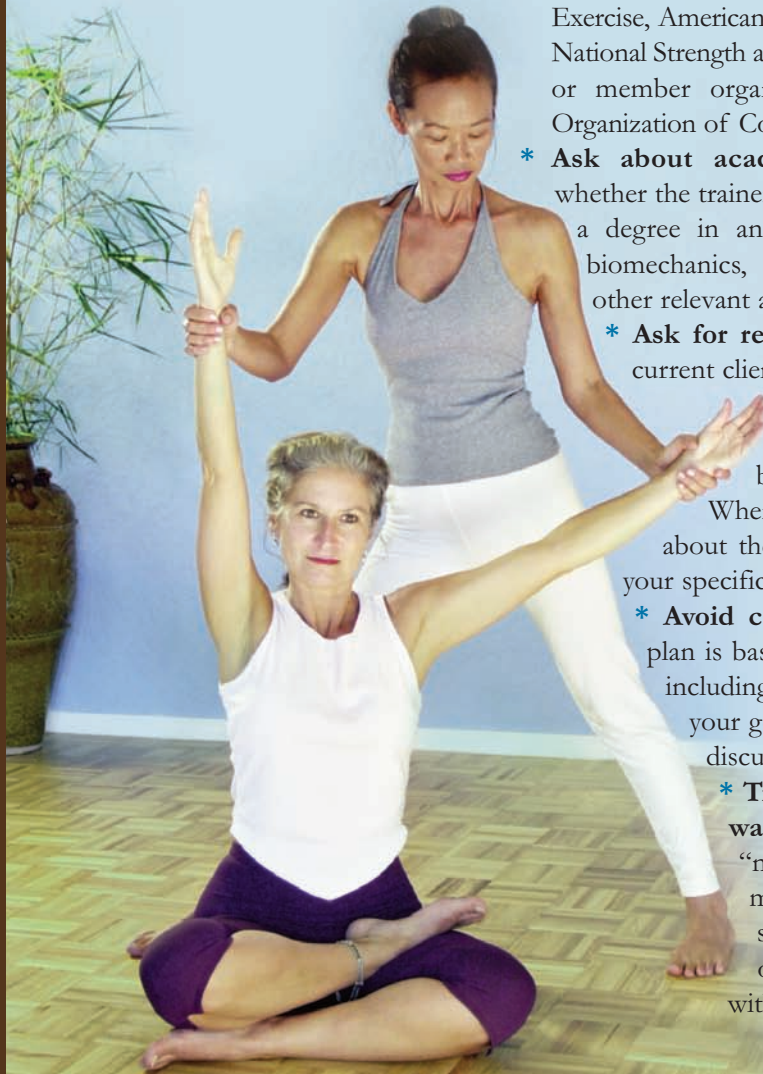
- * **Ask about academic background.** Ask whether the trainer has taken courses in or has a degree in anatomy, exercise physiology, biomechanics, physiology, kinesiology, or other relevant areas.

- * **Ask for references** from previous or current clients. Then call.

- * **Question experience.** Experience is important but knowledge is critical. When discussing experience, ask about the trainer's history related to your specific needs.

- * **Avoid canned programs.** A good plan is based on a number of factors, including a thorough medical history, your goals, medical referrals, and a discussion about behaviors.

- * **Trust your instincts and be wary of pain.** The old adage “no pain, no gain” can do more harm than good. You shouldn't feel like a truck ran over you when you work with a trainer.



SELF-CARE CORNER

10 ways to survive your hospital stay

Ten years ago, the Institute of Medicine reported that nearly 100,000 patients die each year in hospitals because of errors in their care. A new report says not much has changed. Patients are still at risk. Enter the empowered patient. Doctors at Sound Inpatient Physicians, a group of doctors in Tacoma who provide care in hospitals, list 10 ways for you to improve your hospital stay:

- 1. Learn about your illness.** A lack of knowledge can increase anxiety and leave you feeling helpless. Ask your doctor to write down your diagnosis and list your medications (if necessary) and provide you with an educational brochure or recommend a Web site.
- 2. Introduce yourself to new staff.** The hospital is a complex place with many people working multiple shifts. Ask hospital staff to identify themselves and show their hospital ID badges. Every employee is required to wear one.
- 3. Write down your questions and concerns as you think of them.** Unanswered questions can increase your anxiety about the unknown and often lead to worry. Involving your doctor in the conversation will empower you to better cope with your hospital stay. Keeping a daily health journal while you are ill can help you organize your thoughts, questions, and other information.
- 4. Ask your doctor about the plan for the day.** Knowing what to expect throughout your day can help reduce your stress and offer you insight into your care.
- 5. Ask a trusted family member or friend to be at your side.** Decision making may be difficult or impractical due to medications or the severity of your condition when you are a patient. An advocate can provide comfort and support. If necessary, consider having a lawyer set up documents that allow another person to act on your behalf should you be unable to.
- 6. Participate in the decisions about your treatment as much as possible.** If you understand your illness and have your questions answered, you will feel more empowered to discuss your tests and treatment plan.
- 7. Sleep as much as possible.** Rest is important on the road to recovery. But getting a good night's sleep in a hospital sometimes can be hard. Grab a catnap or rest whenever you can.
- 8. Participate in your recovery.** There are parts of your treatment plan you can control, such as sitting up and trying to walk. It is essential to follow the plan given by your health care team.
- 9. Tell your family and friends when to visit.** If they have questions or concerns, the best time to visit is between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. The day staff—those most familiar with your care—are usually still on duty.
- 10. Follow your discharge orders.** Do this for treatments, medications, and appointments.



{Note: Many topics like the one on this page are contained in a medical self-care guide, such as

Healthier at Home®, Health at Home®, and HealthyLife® Self-Care Guide, and/or addressed by a nurse advice line. They serve as excellent resources. If you have a self-care guide and/or access to a nurse advice line, use it whenever you are unsure about what to do for symptoms and health issues you are experiencing.

They can help you make better decisions about when to seek professional assistance and when you can treat yourself at home using self-care.}



MEDICAL NEWS

Colon cancer: Preventable, treatable, beatable

MYTH: YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SCREENED FOR COLON CANCER IF YOU HAVE REGULAR BOWEL MOVEMENTS AND ARE FEELING FINE.



The truth, from the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy is this: Colon cancer is a silent killer. Usually there are no symptoms to rely on, and when there are symptoms, the cancer may be at an advanced stage. When colon cancer is caught early, most people are cured. However, when colon cancer is detected at later stages, the chances for cure are much lower.

Although colon cancer often has no symptoms, warning signs that may indicate colon cancer include blood in your stools, narrower than normal stools, unexplained abdominal pain, unexplained change in bowel habits, and unexplained weight loss. These symptoms may be caused by other less harmful diseases such as hemorrhoids, inflammation in the colon, or irritable bowel syndrome. If you have any of these symptoms, however, you should be checked by your doctor.

There is no substitute for getting tested. Starting at age 50, everyone should be screened for colon cancer, regardless of their lifestyle. In fact, colonoscopy screening allows for the detection and removal of harmless polyps or growths in the colon before cancer develops.

Get more “myth” information from www.screen4coloncancer.org.

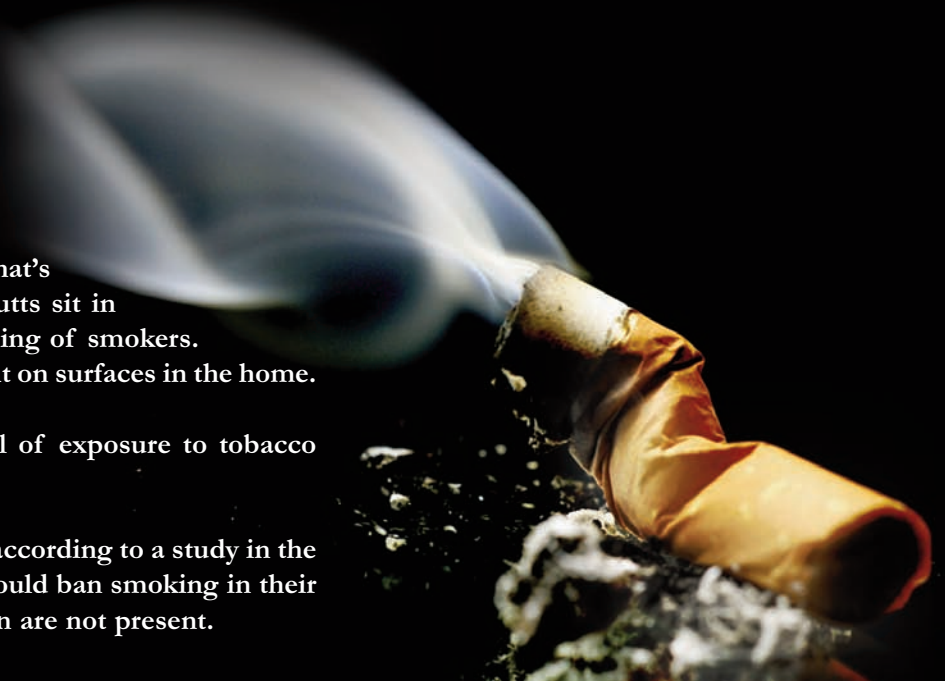
Cigarette smoke x 3

As if smoking wasn't bad enough. As if secondhand smoke (or sidestream smoke) wasn't a danger to others. Now thirdhand smoke puffs its ugly head.

What is thirdhand smoke? It's what's left over after a smoker smokes. Butts sit in dirty ashtrays. Smells cling to clothing of smokers. Toxic gases linger in the air and light on surfaces in the home.

Bottom line: There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke.

Thirdhand smoke harms children, according to a study in the journal *Pediatrics*. And smokers should ban smoking in their homes and cars, even when children are not present.





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EVERY 14 SECONDS

In the time it takes you
to read this message,
the U.S. population will
increase by one person.
Current estimates from
the U.S. Census Bureau
put the total population
at 305.5+ million
people.

Success Over Stress: Make ends meet

With 44% of employees living paycheck-to-paycheck and 60% of employees very concerned about having enough money to make ends meet, it is easy to see how financial uncertainty could add to daily stress, according to the 6th annual MetLife Study of Employee Benefits Trends. "Worries about their own financial security seem inevitable for many Americans," says Ronald Leopold, MD, MetLife vice president. When the going gets tough, Dr. Leopold offers these insights to help you maintain peace of mind during trying times:

- * **Listen to your body's warning signs for stress.** Teeth grinding, headaches, irritability, and depression (among others) are all signs of stress. It is important to recognize these symptoms in order to address them before the situation gets worse and more serious health conditions follow.
- * **Take stress relief seriously.** Nobody can avoid the potential negative effects of stress. Take action: meditation, walking, and other exercises are all good outlets for stress.
- * **Make the most of what you're offered at work.** Take advantage of benefits available to you through your employer. Financial protection products, including insurance, can help you prepare for unplanned risks. Your employer may also provide access to financial planners. Wellness programs, employee assistance programs, gym discounts, child care services, commuter programs, and adoption help are often available to ease personal and financial strains.

