

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Be Fit	1
Self-Care Corner	2
Health Tips	3
Healthy Eating	4
Medical News	6
Success Over Stress.....	8

March 2009



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.

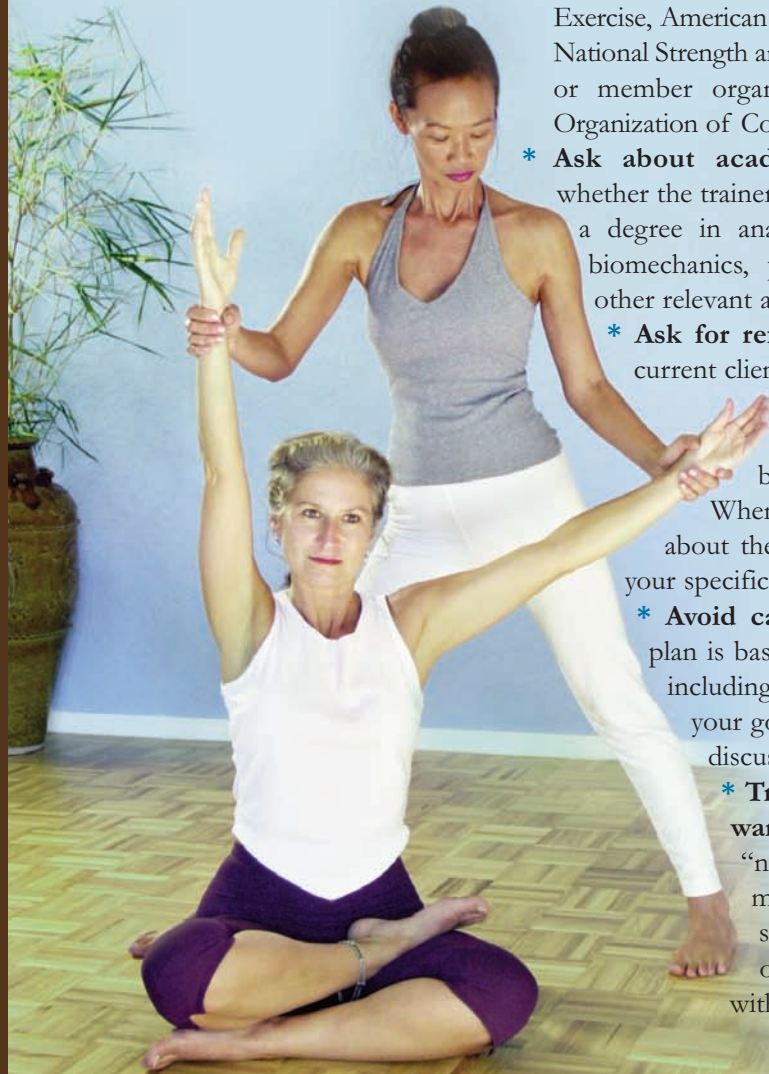
- * **Ask about academic background.** Ask whether the trainer has taken courses in or has a degree in anatomy, exercise physiology, biomechanics, physiology, kinesiology, or other relevant areas.

- * **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.}



HOT tips for spa safety

If you like soaking in a hot tub, take these hot tips to heart to stay safe, says the CDC:

Heed rules for safe and healthy use. Observe limits, if posted, on the maximum number of people who can be in the spa. Children younger than 5 years old should not use spas. If pregnant, consult your doctor before using spas, particularly in the first trimester.

Observe and listen to the spa and its surroundings. What should you notice? No odor—a well-chlorinated spa has little odor. A strong chemical smell indicates a maintenance problem. Smooth spa sides—tiles should not be sticky or slippery. Spa equipment is working—pumps and filtration systems make noise and you should hear them running. Spa temperature should not be higher than 104°F. [If it's your home spa, test the water for adequate chlorine or bromine. Use test strips from pool supply stores.]

Talk to spa owners/staff and other spa users. What was the health inspector's grade for the spa after its last inspection? Are chlorine and pH levels checked at least twice per day? Are these levels checked during times when the spa is most heavily used? Are trained staff members available during the weekends when the spa is most heavily used? What specialized training did the staff take to prepare for working at or operating a spa?

Toes

A pedicure can be a special treat or a regular routine to keep your feet and nails looking and feeling fresh. However you consider a pedicure, take these precautions advises skin doctor, Robert A. Weiss, MD, of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

- * Ask nail technicians how their instruments are cleaned. Avoid any salons that don't appear to be clean. Every instrument needs to be sterilized to prevent the spread of fungus and serious infections.
- * Consider buying your own instruments to use at the salon to lower your risk of getting an infection.
- * Watch to make sure foot baths are properly cleaned after each use.
- * Don't allow the technician to smooth the surface of the nail too much with nail files and buffers at the base of the nail, which can damage the cuticle. The cuticle is the nail's protective barrier, and pushing back on the cuticle can damage it—increasing your risk of infection.



HEALTHY EATING

I'll trade you

Do your kids wheel and deal the school lunch you packed for them? Packing a healthy lunch can be a family activity. Involving kids in the decision process can help them learn how to make good choices and also feel more excited about their lunch options, says child nutrition specialist Dr. Daniel Raiten at the National Institutes of Health.

Most kids are more likely to eat meals they help prepare. Since weekday mornings can be a crazy time, pack lunches the night before. Have your child choose a few healthy items, such as pretzel sticks, popcorn, snap peas, fresh strawberries, or pudding.



How to pack a healthy lunch kids want to “keep” and eat:

- * Shrink the portion size and up the variety.
- * Read the food label before you pack it. Look out for junk food disguised by clever packaging to be healthful.
- * Splash a few drops of lemon juice on sliced fruit to keep it fresh and appetizing.
- * Make a sandwich with turkey or other lean filling on multigrain bread. Try using mustard or a low-fat mayonnaise instead of the high-fat variety.
- * Freeze juice pouches and boxes so they'll stay cold.
- * Re-use containers. It's greener and helps keep food bruise-free.
- * Pack fun with a cool sticker, note, or joke.

If you eat it, write it down

Here's a weight loss secret: Keep a food diary. Knowing what you eat can boost your success in losing weight, according to a study from Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research.

“The more food records people kept, the more weight they lost,” said lead author and researcher Jack Hollis PhD. “Those who kept daily food records lost twice as much weight as those who kept no records. It seems that the simple act of writing down what you eat encourages people to consume fewer calories.”

In addition to keeping food diaries and turning them in at weekly support group meetings, participants were asked to follow a heart-healthy **DASH** (a Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low-fat or non-fat dairy, attend weekly group sessions, and exercise at moderate intensity levels for at least 30 minutes a day.

After 6 months, the average weight loss among the nearly 1,700 participants was about 13 pounds. In this study, the majority of African American participants lost at least 9 pounds of weight.

The results were published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

TIP: USE A NOTEBOOK TO TRACK YOUR DAILY FOOD INTAKE. OR CREATE A DOCUMENT ON YOUR COMPUTER AND WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING YOU EAT AND DRINK EACH DAY. REMEMBER THE OCCASIONAL CANDY AND THE CONDIMENTS ON YOUR SANDWICH. KEEP IT SIMPLE, SAYS MIRIAM E. NELSON, PHD., AUTHOR OF THE STRONG WOMEN BOOK SERIES.



The cold facts about your fridge

You don't have to get tainted food at a party to get sick. You can fall ill from poorly stored foods right in your own refrigerator. Only 20% of us use a thermometer in the fridge, say food experts at the Institute of Food Technologists' annual meeting

One scientist found a variety of nasty germs in 25% of refrigerators he inspected. The worse spots: vegetable bins.

- * Use a thermometer to keep your food cold and safe. Keep temps at 40°F or below, and monitor several times a day.
- * Throw out ready-to-eat foods by package storage dates.
- * Clean your refrigerator weekly (how many of us do that?). Wash inside and out with dish soap. Allow the shelves and drawers to air dry.



Featured Recipe

Cherry Buttermilk Scones

Scones are best freshly baked and straight from the oven.

Ingredients:

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour	1/2 cup oatmeal
2 tsp baking powder	1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon	1/4 tsp salt
1/3 cup sugar + 1 tablespoon sugar, divided	
1/4 cup cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces	
3/4 cup dried tart cherries, finely chopped	
1/2 cup low-fat buttermilk	
3 large eggs, divided (2 for scone batter; 1 for egg wash)	
Additional flour for cutting scones	

Directions:

Combine dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. Cut in butter with a pastry blender until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Stir in the dried cherries. In another bowl, whisk together the buttermilk and 2 eggs. Add liquid mixture to dry mixture, stirring just until moist (dough will be soft and sticky). Allow dough to rest for 10 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Flour surface for forming scones. Turn out dough and knead 2 to 3 times. Dough will be very soft. Divide dough in half. Roll each piece of dough into a 5-inch circle about 3/4-inch thick. Using a sharp knife, cut each round into 8 pie-shaped wedges. Using a metal spatula, carefully transfer wedges onto a cookie sheet, arranging so that wedges are not touching. They should be at least 1 1/2 inches apart.

In a small bowl, whisk remaining egg with 1 T of water to make an egg wash. Brush a very light coat of egg wash onto the top of each scone; sprinkle tops of scones with remaining tablespoon of sugar, and bake for about 13 minutes, or until the tops are lightly browned and the insides are fully baked. The scones will be firm to the touch. Serve warm.

Makes 16 scones. Each scone: 142 calories, 4 g fat (2 g sat fat), 191 mg sodium, 24 g carbs, 2 g fiber.

From The Cherry Marketing Institute, www.choosecherries.com.

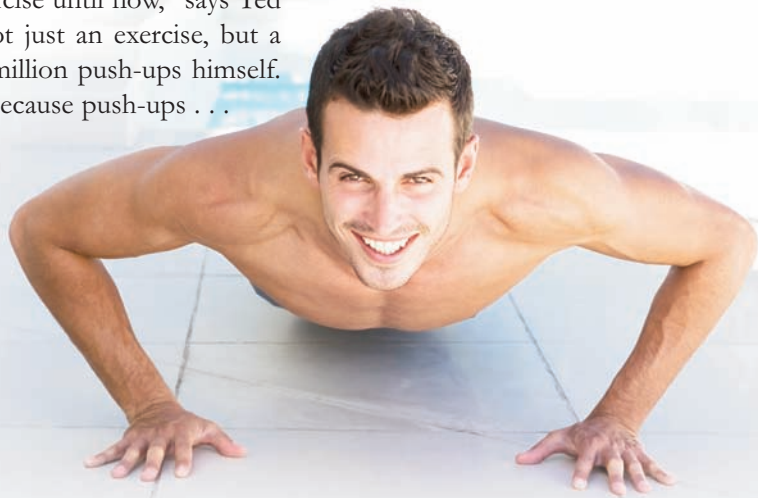


MEDICAL NEWS

Push-ups: The new horizontal jogging

“Push-ups have always been perceived as a warm-up exercise until now,” says Ted Skup, author of *Death, Taxes & Push-Ups*. “This is not just an exercise, but a fitness lifestyle,” he says. Skup has done more than 10 million push-ups himself. Skup says push-ups are the most dynamic exercise ever because push-ups . . .

- * work most major muscle groups.
- * are free! No start-up costs.
- * can be done anywhere—total portability.
- * have a low risk of injury.
- * solve time management issues.
- * are key to weight management.
- * maintain a healthy heart and body.
- * are not just an exercise, but a fitness lifestyle.
- * are a simple and basic exercise with dramatic results.
- * are addicting and fun.



Music for heart health

Listening to your favorite music may be good for your heart. Researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine have shown for the first time that the emotions aroused by joyful music have a healthy effect on how blood vessels work. Participants in the study selected music that made them feel good and brought them a sense of joy. The music also caused tissue in the inner lining of blood vessels to dilate (or expand) in order to increase blood flow. This is the same sort of healthy response that laughter causes. When volunteers listened to music they said was stressful, their blood vessels narrowed, producing a potentially unhealthy response that reduced blood flow.



The results of the study were presented at the Scientific Sessions of the American Heart Association.



Round & round you go

The room is spinning. You're dizzy. Hold on. You may have vertigo. Simple vertigo is easy to treat, according to new guidelines from the American Academy of Neurology. If your vertigo is caused by an inner ear disorder, loose calcium carbonate crystals are moving inside the sensing tubes of your inner ear causing you to feel as if you're on a carnival ride.

Your doctor can perform a series of head and body movements while you sit on a bed or table. You can even learn to do this at home.

The head movements actually move the crystals out of the sensing tube and into another inner chamber of the ear where they can be absorbed.

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.

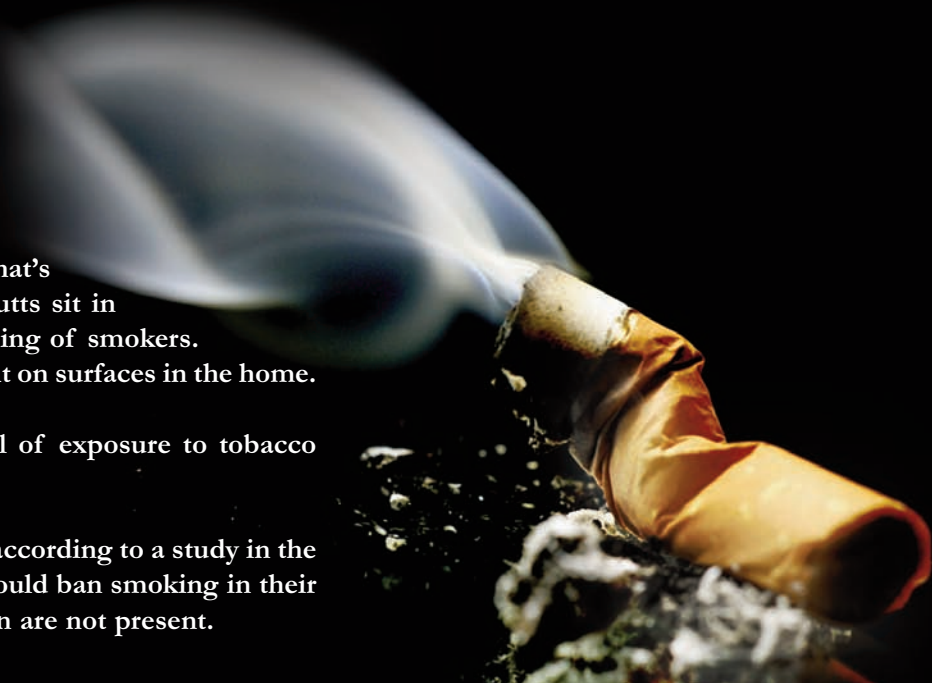
Cigarette smoke x 3

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.





Copyright 2009, American Institute
for Preventive Medicine.
30445 Northwestern Hwy., Ste. 350,
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
248.539.1800 • aipm@healthylife.com
www.HealthyLife.com
All rights reserved.



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.

