Employee Wellness Solutions Network
Nutrition | Balanced Lifestyle | Fitness

# WellNotes®

**MARCH 2013**

## Give Your Bottom a Break

Drive to work. Sit at your desk. Drive home. Eat dinner. Watch TV. Your life is probably more complicated than that, but chances are good you spend a lot of time sitting. That's a problem because sitting is hazardous to your health. A recent study found that sitting for three or more hours a day can shorten your life by two years. And that's even if you exercise regularly and don't smoke.

In a study of 167,000 adults, researchers found that the average adult spends at least nine hours a day sitting. Too much time on your bottom can lead to type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. These conditions are among the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States.

To live longer, aim to sit less and move more. Take a quick break from sitting every hour. And try these simple activities to give your bottom a break.

### At work:

- Take regular breaks to stand up, stretch, and move.
- Walk to give a co-worker a message.
- Hold meetings standing up, or while walking.
- Use a stand-up desk at work.

### At home:

- Stand up and jog in place during commercials.
- Pace back and forth when you're thinking or talking on the phone.
- Walk through your house to find a family member, instead of yelling.
- Walk your dog, instead of paying someone to do it for you or ignoring your four-footed friend.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*
*Harvard School of Public Health.*

Get reminders to stand up and stretch **tinyurl.com/byw9bdu**

## Americans Idle – At Risk for Diabetes

On the popular TV show American Idol, judge Randy Jackson dishes out advice to up-and-coming singers. The weekly show draws about 26 million viewers. That's about the same number of people who have type 2 diabetes in the United States. And Jackson is one of them.

Diabetes is a condition that limits your body's ability to turn sugar into energy. It can damage your heart, vision, arteries, brain, kidneys, and nerves. When Jackson finally faced the music about his diabetes, he was ready to change. He improved his diet. He began walking 35 to 45 minutes a day on a treadmill. He lost weight, and now controls his diabetes without medication.

## Wake Up Early to Exercise

If you've ever spent a sleepless night watching infomercials or counting sheep, you're not alone. About 40 percent of all adults in the United States have trouble sleeping at some time each year. Lack of sleep has been linked to diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and depression. And it's often a factor in car accidents and on-the-job injuries.
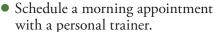
Fortunately, you can do more than toss and turn all night. New research suggests that exercising in the morning can help you sleep better at night.

In a recent study, scientists found that working out in the morning improved the quality of sleep for participants. Those who completed 30 minutes of exercise on a treadmill at 7 a.m., slept better at night than those who did the same workout at 1 p.m. or 7 p.m.

Arrange your schedule to exercise in the morning to get the rest you need. And aim to get seven to eight hours of sleep a night. You'll be more likely to exercise early when you:

- Organize your workout gear the night before.
- Attend a group fitness class in the morning.
- Schedule a morning appointment with a personal trainer.
- Find a workout partner to hold you accountable.

*American College of Sports Medicine.*
*Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.*
*National Sleep Foundation.*

49 ways to wake up early **www.howtowakeupearly.com**

# Kiwifruit – More Vitamin C Than Oranges

Bite into a kiwifruit and the sweet and sour taste can transport you to a tropical paradise. This fruit earned its common name when it arrived in New Zealand in the South Pacific. With a handful of seeds from China given to him by a friend, a local farmer with an interest in unusual plants grew the first kiwifruit. Locals renamed the Chinese gooseberry after their national bird, the kiwi. It's small, brown, and fuzzy, much like the fruit.

On the outside, the kiwifruit might not be as enticing as a shiny, red apple. But inside, the tangy, bright-green fruit speckled with edible black seeds is bursting with vitamin C and other nutrients.

A single kiwifruit contains 120 percent of the vitamin C you need in a day. That's more vitamin C than found in an orange. This antioxidant has been shown to strengthen the immune system, help prevent certain types of cancer, and reduce the risk for heart disease.

**How to peel a kiwifruit**
**tinyurl.com/ be7jw8g**

Kiwifruit is also a good source of fiber and potassium. Research shows that eating fruits and vegetables with these nutrients helps manage cholesterol levels, prevent heart disease, and lower blood pressure.

In a recent study, researchers followed 118 people with high blood pressure for eight weeks. One group ate three kiwifruit a day. Another group ate one apple a day. Researchers found that the kiwifruit group lowered their blood pressure by three points more than the apple group.

This fruit is a delicious snack. It's tasty in green salads, fruity salsa, smoothies, or used as an ice cream topping. Try the kiwifruit. You'll savor the sweet and sour taste, and enjoy thinking of your next vacation in paradise.

*American Heart Association.*

*U.S. Department of Agriculture.*

# It's Time for a Menu Makeover

In many ways, your body is like a car engine. You need to fuel it with healthy foods so it can function properly. But if you fill up by ordering from the fast-food menu, your health will suffer.

Restaurants serve an estimated 50 million fast-food meals a day in the United States. It's one reason heart disease, diabetes, and obesity have become such major health problems. And new research shows that even a single fast-food meal can be harmful to your health.

A study measured blood vessel and artery function in 28 healthy non-smokers after they fasted for 12 hours and ate two different meals. For one meal, they ate salmon, almonds, and vegetables cooked in olive oil. These foods are rich in healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat – the "good" fats. A week later they ate a fast-food meal of sausage, an egg, a slice of cheese, and three servings of hash browns. These fast foods are high in unhealthy saturated fats.

Researchers found that the fast-food meal restricted blood vessel and

**Choose foods with healthy fats**
**tinyurl.com/ aaea7ow**

artery function by 24 percent. After the healthy meal, blood vessels and arteries showed normal function.

If you want to improve your heart health, live longer, and reduce the risk for chronic disease, fuel your body with healthy foods. Eat more fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, whole grains, and fish. And skip the drive-thru.

*Canadian Journal of Cardiology.*
*Pew Research Center.*
*Harvard School of Public Health.*

## ASK THE DOCTOR — Wellness

**Q:** How can I get enough calcium in my diet without dairy products?

**A:** Go to **www.wellsource.info/ wn/ask-non-dairy-calcium.pdf** to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: **evan@ wellsource.com**, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

## Americans Idle
### *(continued from page 1)*

Exercising is a proven way to help manage your blood sugar levels and lower your risk for diabetes. Studies show that when overweight diabetic people pedaled a bike moderately for an hour, they lowered their blood sugar levels by up to 50 percent, compared to being sedentary. And the effect lasted for 24 hours. Other moderate activities like walking and weight training had the same effect.

To lower your risk for diabetes, exercise 30 to 60 minutes a day. This will help you lower blood sugar levels, lose weight, and reduce body fat. Jackson keeps his treadmill next to his bed to remind him to exercise. And when he's on the road, he wakes up early to make time to exercise.

"If you can't get to a gym, take a walk," Jackson says. "Park your car a little farther away from where you are heading, or take the stairs. Every little bit helps, as long as you keep moving."

*American Diabetes Association.*

*Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise.*

**Easy ways to be more active**
**tinyurl.com/ a2vkpkv**