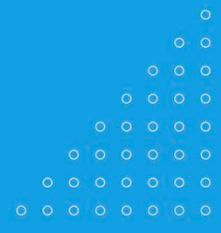


WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

February 2024



HIGHLIGHTS for the [February 2024 Newsletter](#)

Eat Like a Winner with a Healthy Super Bowl Game Plan

When Super Bowl Sunday arrives so does the game-day buffet table. Want to eat like a winner? As an armchair quarterback, use these four plays to keep your diet in check and still enjoy the food and football.

The Surprising Truth About Soap: Antibacterial vs. Plain

Cold and flu season typically peaks in February. So what are you going to do to avoid getting sick? Washing your hands is a critical step to keep germs away. But which is better, antibacterial soap or plain soap? Here's what you need to know...

Slip THIS Fruit Into Your Diet for Better Health

Chances are pretty good you've seen a slip-on-banana-peel comedy sketch at some point. But did you know this fruit is packed with potassium and other nutrients that can protect your health. Here's why you should slip this fruit into your diet...

Y-Axis: Wag More. Bark Less.

Stressed out about something in your life? Chronic stress can raise your blood pressure and increase your risk for a heart attack or stroke. But with a little help from a furry friend, you can change that. Here's how...

Recipe: Strawberry Banana Parfait

Hungry for a sweet treat that's healthy and super easy to make? Give this Strawberry Banana Parfait recipe a try.

Take the February Health Challenge!

Know Your Medical History: Get info to manage your health

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: What can I do to motivate myself to exercise?



THE Y AXIS



Wag More. Bark Less.

Got a furry, four-legged friend? If not, maybe you should.



Owning a pet might be a lot of work. (Think poop patrol, meals, vet visits, hairballs...)

But being a pet owner may be good for your health.

A Purr-fect Way to Lower Blood Pressure

Research shows that petting Fido or Mittens can help lower blood pressure.

One study followed a group of stock brokers taking medication to control blood pressure.⁵ Adding a pet to their treatment plan actually helped lower blood pressure better than medication alone.

Got high blood pressure?

Making friends with a dog or cat can help. Bow-wow...Meow.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

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Eat Like a Winner with a Healthy Super Bowl Game Plan

Call these plays for healthy game-day eating

It's no secret that the Super Bowl is best-known for two things. Food and football. Ask any armchair quarterback, and they'll tell you every team has a game plan.

And you should too, when it comes to snacking and eating during the Super Bowl.

Fun fact: An estimated 113 million people will tune in to watch the San Francisco 49ers play the Kansas City Chiefs on Feb. 11 at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas, Nev., in Super Bowl LVIII.¹

Planning to eat your way through a Super Bowl party? It's time to get your game face on.

- You need to be ready to stare down that buffet table loaded with piles of food, drinks, and desserts.
- Try and wing it, and you run the risk of a penalty when you step on the scale.

Take control of your diet with these proven plays:

Play #1: Know your daily personal calorie limit

Find out how many calories you should be eating per day at <http://tinyurl.com/okelq8g>. Track your calories with a mobile app or food journal. Use

your daily calorie goal to help you decide what to eat before, during and after the game.

Play #2: Eat light earlier in the day

When you know you're headed to a big meal later in the day, cut back on calories before you go. Eat light. Choose a green salad, soup, or fruits and vegetables. Then when the dinner bell rings and it's game-on, you won't be as hungry.

Play #3: Sample everything in small portions

Unless you plan to burn as many calories as a pro-football linebacker in a tough game, forget about piling a mountain of food on your plate. Instead, dish up a small sample of everything. Take time to chew your food. Enjoy the conversation + cheering for your favorite team. You'll eat fewer calories and avoid overeating.

Play #4: Hustle away from the table

After the game is over, it's time to wrap up eating, too. Plan to take a walk and exercise to burn off a few of those extra calories. You might even organize a friendly game of football.

MORE

5 tips for healthy Super-Bowl snacking
<http://tinyurl.com/2wf6vx59>

The Surprising Truth About Soap: Antibacterial vs. Plain

FDA says plain soap and water is better, safer

It's no secret cold and flu season typically spikes in February.

And it's something celebrity Howie Mandell and host of *America's Got Talent* thinks about a lot. He only greets people with a fist bump to avoid germs. And he washes his hands a lot.

You should, too. But should you splurge on the more expensive antibacterial soap? Maybe not.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration found that many antibacterial soaps and body washes contain at least 17 chemicals that could cause health problems.² Health experts also believe these products may be a reason for a rise in bacteria that resist antibiotics.



Wash your hands with plain soap & water

It's a simple solution that works to help remove germs. The right way to wash your hands:

1. Rinse your hands under running water.
2. Lather up with soap.



Strawberry Banana Parfait

Hungry for a sweet treat that's healthy and super easy to make? Give this Strawberry Banana Parfait recipe a try⁴

Ingredients

- 1/2 medium banana, mashed
- 1/8 tsp vanilla
- 1/3 C non-fat plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 C fresh strawberries, sliced
- 1/2 C bran or wheat flakes cereal

Directions

1. Stir banana and vanilla into yogurt. Combine well.
2. In a 10-12-ounce glass, layer the yogurt-banana mixture, strawberries and cereal.
3. Serve immediately and enjoy

Serves 1. 190 calories per serving.

Slip THIS Fruit Into Your Diet for Better Health

Discover the health benefits of bananas

In the early 1900s, vaudeville performer “Sliding” Billy Watson saw a man on the street slip on a banana peel. The man twisted and turned. He flailed his arms. He tried to stay on his feet. But he couldn’t. Watson was thoroughly amused.

Not long after that, he performed the banana-peel scene for his stage show. Long before the Internet, this comedy sketch went viral. And it still gets some laughs.

You don’t want to slip on a banana peel. But go ahead and slip this fruit into your diet.

Bananas are good for your health.³ One banana is a good source of fiber, potassium, magnesium, vitamin B6, vitamin C, and more.

Research shows bananas can help:

- Regulate blood pressure
- Support bone health
- Reduce the risk for a stroke
- Lower heart attack risk
- Improve digestion
- Support weight management, and more



Hungry for a fast and healthy snack?

Eat a banana. It’s a delicious addition to cereal, yogurt, smoothies or a fruit salad. Mash some up and make muffins, or just have one for a snack.

Fun fact: The average American eats about 27 pounds of bananas a year. More than half of those are gobbled up at the breakfast table.

Daily dose: Most adults should eat 1-1/2 to 2 cups of fruit per day. But only 12 percent actually eat enough fruit.

Not eating enough fruit? Try a banana. Just make sure the peel ends up in the garbage or compost bin.

MORE

Health benefits of bananas
<http://tinyurl.com/2p9pnruxyvzy5x5d>

The Surprising Truth About Soap: Antibacterial vs. Plain (continued from page 1)

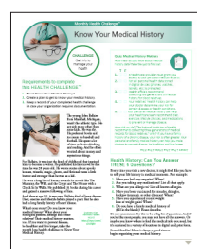
3. Rub your hands and fingers together for at least 20 seconds. That’s about how long it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
4. Rinse well.
5. Dry your hands with a clean cloth or paper towel.
6. If possible, use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door to leave the bathroom.

MORE

The science of hand washing
<http://tinyurl.com/y8kt57fh>

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Take the February Health Challenge!

Know Your Medical History: Get info to manage your health

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: What can I do to motivate myself to exercise?



Know Your Medical History

CHALLENGE

Get info to manage your health

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Know Your Medical History.”
2. Create a plan to get to know your medical history.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



The young John Bellairs from Marshall, Michigan, wasn't the athletic type. He got sick more often than some kids. He was shy. He preferred books and ice cream to baseball and football. He spent a lot of time at home thinking and reading. And he often worried about money and mysterious things.

For Bellairs, it was just the kind of childhood that inspired him to become a writer. He published his first novel by the time he was 28 years old. He wrote stories about spooky houses, wizards, magic, ghosts, and fictional teens a little braver and stronger than he was as a kid.

He won a long list of literary awards for novels like *The Mummy*, *the Will*, and *the Crypt* and *The House with a Clock In Its Walls*. He published 31 books during his career and gained a massive following of fans.

And then at age 53, it was over. Bellairs died of heart disease. Diet, exercise and lifestyle habits played a part. But he also had a long family history of heart disease.

What's your story? Do you know your medical history? What about your biological parents, siblings and other relatives? Their medical history matters, too. If you want to prevent disease, be healthier and live longer, take the month long health challenge to Know Your Medical History.



Quiz: Medical History Matters

How much do you know about medical history data? Take the quiz to find out.



- | | T | F |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- A healthcare provider must grant you access to your personal medical records.
- Not all personal health data stored in digital devices (phones, watches, tablets, etc.) is protected.
- Health officials recommend collecting two generations of medical history for blood relatives.
- Your relatives' health history can help your doctor determine your risk for certain diseases or health conditions.
- Your personal medical history can help your healthcare team recommend diet, exercise, lifestyle choices, and medications to prevent or manage disease.

How did you do? The National Institutes of Health recommends collecting three generations of medical records for blood relatives.¹ Why? If you have a family history of a chronic disease, your risk is often greater. Your personal and family medical history can help you make choices to prevent disease, be healthier, and live longer.

Answers: 1.True, 2.True, 3.False, 4.True, 5.True.

Health History: Can You Answer THESE 6 Questions?

Every time you visit a new doctor, it might feel like you have to tell your life history in medical moments. For example:

1. Have you had any surgeries? When?
2. Are you taking any medications? List all that apply.
3. What are you allergic to? List all known allergies.
4. Have you been vaccinated for measles, shingles, lockjaw (tetanus), or other diseases? When?
5. Have you experienced recent weight loss or weight gain? When?
6. Do you have a family medical history of (fill in the blank)? Please describe.

It's not uncommon for this to be a big list of questions. And if you're like most people, you may not have all the answers. Or maybe you know where to find the medical info you need, but it's scattered in a variety of locations in digital and print form.

Sound familiar? Now is always a good time to begin organizing your medical history.



5 Ways to Know Your Medical History

Wondering where to start? Here are some easy ways to get to know your medical history, get organized, prevent disease, and stay healthy.

1. Keep your medical records in one place

Prefer old-school paper format? Get a notebook or binder to create a paper trail of your medical history. Whenever you get a bill, diagnosis, test results, or explanation of benefits, add it to your binder. It's a good place to keep a copy of your health insurance card, too.

If you prefer digital, scan or take a picture of these documents and save them on your computer. Bring this with you when you go to a doctor's appointment.

2. Compile healthcare contact info

Do you know how to contact your doctor, dentist, chiropractor, or other healthcare professional?

- Compile all the contact information for your healthcare providers in one place.
- Name, address, phone number, email address.
- You may even include a note
- for each record about your last visit.
- Keep it in your notebook or digital file.

Digital tools to manage your health history <https://tinyurl.com/y2pnw33>

3. Request your records

Maybe you moved away, changed doctors, or haven't been to see a doctor in a long time. You can still get your records.

- Federal law gives you the right to obtain your medical records from virtually any organization or business that provides healthcare services.² Just ask.

4. Use digital tools

- **Most healthcare organizations** use online patient portals that allow you to access your medical records.
- **Your employer** may also provide a wellness portal or platform that contains your health information.
- **And there's a growing number of mobile apps** that allow you to store and organize your medical history.

Use these digital tools to manage your health, share information with your doctor, and track your medical history.³

5. Talk to your family members

Your personal health history provides useful information to monitor your health. But it's not the whole story.⁴ If you have a family history of certain health conditions, your risk rises.

Video: How to access your medical records <http://tinyurl.com/mr37df29>

Common diseases that run in families include:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Breast cancer
- Lung cancer
- Prostate cancer

How do you learn the health history of your family members?

The easiest way: just ask.

- **Talk about it.** Set aside some time to talk about it. Keep notes, and add the information to your binder or digital file.
- **If you're adopted,** you may be able to access medical records about your biological parents.
- **If you don't have medical information** from an adoption or don't know your biological parents or family members, genetic testing can give you some insight into your health risks.

When you know your medical history, you've got information that can help you prevent disease, manage health conditions, feel better, and live longer.



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Know Your Medical History

CHALLENGE

Get info to manage your health

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Create a plan to get to know your medical history and organize it.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to get to know your medical history.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	
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_____ Number of days this month I took action to learn about my medical history

_____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

Q.

What can I do to motivate myself to exercise?

A.

If you're having trouble fitting in a workout or some form of physical activity, you're not alone.

About 71 percent of adults don't get enough exercise.¹

Here's what health experts recommend for exercise:²

- **At least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise a week.** Go for a walk. Ride a bike. Swim. Dance. Even yard work and housekeeping can elevate your heart rate to improve your health.
- **Resistance or strength training 2 days a week.** This will make your muscles strong, build endurance, and tone up your body. Examples include push-ups, weight lifting, or even carrying groceries.

Lack motivation to exercise? It's one of the top five most common barriers to being active.³ But it doesn't have to be that way.

Here are 7 simple ways to boost motivation to exercise

1. Get a training partner. It's easy to hit the snooze button or skip a workout if you're trying to exercise on your own. But research shows that people who train with a



partner complete an average of 56% more workouts that people who train alone.⁴

- 2. Track your activity.** Keep a journal. Record your workouts on a calendar. Or use a fitness tracking device or mobile app. Log your activity every day. It's a great way to measure your progress over time and stay motivated.
- 3. Use social media.** A recent study showed that being part of a positive online group can help you be more active than trying to do it alone.⁵ Share your progress to motivate others, too.
- 4. Take a fitness class.** You'll have fun. You'll make friends with people who have similar goals to help you stay motivated. And a 60-minute workout will go by in a flash.
- 5. Sign up for a challenge.** It's another great way to motivate yourself to exercise. Try a 30-day plank challenge or push-up challenge. Register for a race a few months away, and start training. Or sign up for an 8-week weight-loss challenge at your gym, and follow the program.

ASK THE *Wellness* DOCTOR

6. Change your routine. Tired of the same workout routine. Change it. Try cycling instead of running, or racquetball instead of swimming. Create a new walking route. Or change how long, how often, or how hard you do your current routine.

7. Work with a coach or trainer.

If you haven't exercised in a while, or you're not sure where to start, work with a coach or trainer. In one 10-week study, researchers found that 60% percent of people who worked with a trainer made improvements in strength, endurance and body composition.

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