

TOPHEALTH®

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The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

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How to Live Longer

According to Longevity Corner author Zorba Paster, M.D., living longer depends on much more than diet and exercise.

You need to pay attention to all five spheres of wellness:

● **PHYSICAL** Good nutrition, physical fitness and maintaining a healthy weight are only part of the picture. Avoiding risky behaviors such as smoking, practicing safety measures such as wearing a seatbelt, and getting regular health screenings are important, too.

● **MENTAL** Your psychological, emotional and cognitive health (how sharp your thinking is) comprise your mental sphere. Learning to manage stress, handle anger and maintain a positive attitude all helps your health.

● **FAMILY AND SOCIAL** Social wellness, including healthy relationships with family, friends and coworkers, builds confidence and self-esteem. You don't have to be a social butterfly — close bonds with even a few people can motivate you to take better care of yourself.

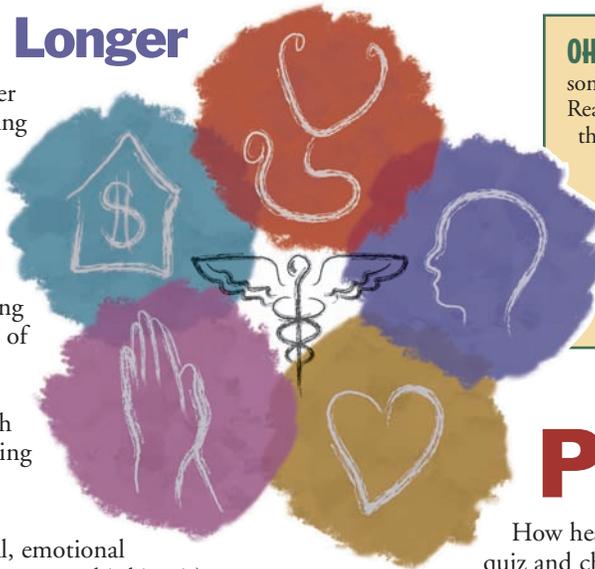
● **SPIRITUAL** Scientific evidence shows that people who make room for spirituality appear to live longer. Whether attending church or seeking quiet, meditative time, a spiritual path can help you cope with depression, reduce anger and relieve stress.

● **MATERIAL** Are you happy with your job? Your house? The state of your finances? Research shows that people who are well off plan in advance for the future — on average, a five-year outlook. Invest in yourself, making decisions with the bigger picture in mind.

Longevity depends on many factors. Take control of those you can — and live as long as you're able.

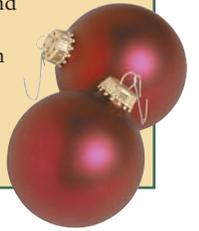
■ DR. ZORBA'S LONGEVITY CORNER

A SIGHT BETTER Several recent articles from the *Archives of Ophthalmology* point out how to avoid macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness that affects more than 75 percent of all adults over age 75. Studies have shown that smoking doubles the risk of having severe macular degeneration and that eating fish once a week reduces the risk by half. So eat fish; it's good for your heart and also good for your eyes. As for smoking, the day you quit you begin to reduce the risk of this devastating disease.



OH, CHRISTMAS TREE Did you know that some people are allergic to Christmas trees? Real or artificial, the trees can harbor molds that cause allergic reactions. **Steps:**

Try shaking a real tree well and allowing it to dry before bringing it inside. Clean an artificial tree if it's been in storage to wipe off mold that may have gathered.



POPQuiz

How health savvy are you? Take the following quiz and check the answers on page 2.

1. An "apple" describes a person who
 - A. Carries extra weight around the hips
 - B. Carries extra weight around the waist
 - C. Eats too much fruit
2. The right amount of water to drink each day is
 - A. As much as your thirst tells you to drink
 - B. Eight 8-ounce glasses
 - C. Two gallons
3. The ideal blood pressure is
 - A. Below 120/80 mm Hg
 - B. Greater than 200 mg
 - C. 60 beats per minute
4. Cutting portion sizes has been shown to help cut
 - A. Dozens of calories per day
 - B. An average of 100 calories per day
 - C. 200-plus calories per day
5. Anxiety disorders affect
 - A. 4 million adults
 - B. 40 million adults
 - C. Few adults; mostly children are affected



True or false?

6. Breathing in exhaust fumes while driving poses little risk.
7. In some cases, eating more can help you lose weight.
8. When one quits smoking, the body begins to repair itself almost immediately.
9. Trans fat is the new "good" fat.
10. Osteoporosis, the thinning of bones, can develop silently for years.

(answers on next page)

Pop Quiz ... (continued)

The Answers Score 10 points for each correct answer.

- 1. B.** A round upper body or apple shape may put you at greater risk for diabetes and heart disease than a “pear” shape with extra weight around the hips.
- 2. A.** Recent research from the U.S. Institute of Medicine suggests that in general, letting thirst be your guide may suffice to keep the body properly hydrated.
- 3. A.** Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). High blood pressure is 140/90 mm Hg or higher.
- 4. C.** A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that women who reduced portion sizes cut an average of 231 calories per day; more than 800 when they also ate lower-fat versions of snacks and desserts.
- 5. B.** The good news is that effective treatments are available, from psychotherapy to prescription medications.
- 6. False.** Research shows that toxins inhaled while driving on roadways can threaten the cardiovascular system. Keep windows closed and put the air conditioning on recirculation when in heavy traffic.
- 7. True.** Eating foods that contain fewer calories per ounce, such as fruits, vegetables, soups and stews, can help you feel full longer while you consume fewer calories overall.
- 8. True.** One’s heart rate drops within 20 minutes of quitting and the carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal within 12 hours.
- 9. False.** Unlike monounsaturated and polyunsaturated “good” fats, trans fat is an unhealthy saturated fat. Best way to cut trans fat: Read nutrition labels to choose trans fat-free foods.
- 10. True.** That’s why it’s important to choose plenty of calcium-rich foods such as low-fat dairy, and vegetables such as broccoli and greens. Also consider a calcium supplement, do weight-bearing exercise and ask your health care provider about bone density testing.

PYRAMID POWER

Want to evaluate your diet? Go to the USDA’s interactive Web site, www.mypyramidtracker.gov. The program rates your daily diet as compared to the government’s Dietary Guidelines and the Food Pyramid. You can also get a clearer picture of how many calories you burn each day.



“Those who do not make time for exercise will have to find time for illness.” — Earl of Derby

Good-Time Trimmers and Toners

No matter how busy you get this holiday season, you’ll find time for these fast fitness techniques:

Hanging decorations?

While standing, move your feet shoulder-width apart, pointing out at 45-degree angles. Place your hands on your hips and slowly raise your heels while tightening your buttocks. Slowly lower your heels to the floor and repeat.

Making a list?

While sitting down, inhale deeply; while you exhale, tighten your abdominal muscles, pulling your navel toward your spine. Hold for five seconds, then release as you inhale deeply. Do as many reps as you can fit into three minutes.

Watching holiday TV specials? Get up off the couch and stand in front of your set, with your legs slightly apart and your arms outstretched. Lower your buttocks as if sitting down but just tap the edge of the cushion and return to a full standing position. Try three sets of 10 repetitions.

With a little imagination, you can turn holiday activities into energy-building exercise — another reason to celebrate.



Beating Daytime Drowsiness

About 40 percent of Americans say they often feel drowsy during the day. *These simple steps can help you overcome that sleepy feeling and stay alert:*

Get moving. Even a brief walk of 15-30 minutes will do wonders for your energy level.

Eat light. Choose small meals and snacks rather than large meals to minimize the sluggishness that follows rapid changes in

blood sugar. **Good choices:** low-fat microwave popcorn; cut-up veggies with fat-free dip; cottage cheese or fat-free yogurt with fruit; rice cakes spread with peanut butter.

Take 20. If policy permits, try taking a short nap. A brief snooze — no more than 20 minutes, many experts say — can make a difference in alertness, judgment, safety and productivity.

Change your commute. Average commutes are growing longer, possibly contributing to fatigue. Next time you wake up drowsy, try public transportation or carpooling with a coworker if those are options. You’ll arrive at work better rested and ready to start — and finish — the day in good spirits.

To avoid that sleepy feeling: Go to bed earlier. Most people need to sleep seven to nine hours in order to feel rested.

NEXT MONTH: New Year, New You