

TOPHEALTH[®]

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

We Care About Your Health

NOVEMBER 2007

TOPHEALTH TURNS 20!

It started 20 years ago with a simple mission: Give busy employees expert, accurate and easy-to-follow health tips in a quick-read format.

Today, TOPHEALTH is one of the most widely read health and wellness newsletters designed for the workplace. Its focus on illness prevention, self-care and stress management has helped millions of readers keep fit, stay healthy and enjoy life more. Occasionally, someone has even written to say we saved his or her life. We're proud of our uniquely positive and motivational approach to taking charge of one's well-being, and we pledge to continue to give you the vital information you need to stay in top health.



4 Ways to Fight Colds and Flu

1 Wash your hands frequently

— one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs. Use soap and warm water and dry with a clean towel.

2 Avoid close contact with anyone who's sick, especially during the first few days of the illness.

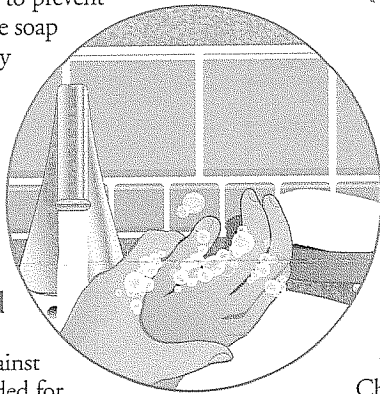
3 Get vaccinated

every year. A flu shot is your best protection against the flu. It is recommended for everyone, starting at age 6 months.

Another option for anyone age 5 to 49 who is healthy and not pregnant is the nasal spray vaccine. **Best time for vaccination:** October or November. Ask your health care provider for more details.

4 If you do get the flu, prescription antiviral medications (when used right away) can reduce symptoms, make you less contagious and help you get well faster. Stay home when you are sick, to help speed your recovery and keep others from getting sick.

More tips: Get enough sleep, exercise regularly and eat a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables to strengthen your immune system. Now that's good "health insurance."



QUITTING SMOKING FOR GOOD

If you have tried repeatedly to quit smoking only to find yourself lighting up again, you're in good company. Most smokers make several attempts before they stop for good.

The good news is that there's more help available than ever before. **Try these suggestions:**

● **Line up support.** Free telephone counseling is available in most states (see www.cancer.org or www.smokefree.gov). To find support groups, check with your employer, health plan, local hospital or Nicotine Anonymous. Family, friends and co-workers can often provide helpful encouragement as well.

● **Consider joining a program.** The best smoking cessation programs provide ongoing counseling with well-trained leaders. Beware of programs that promise instant success, cost a lot of money, don't offer references from former participants, or use injections or "secret" ingredients.

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"A man's health can be judged by which he takes two at a time — pills or stairs." — Joan Welsh

Choosing a Calcium Supplement

You never outgrow your need for calcium. It's vital for bone and heart health. If you believe your diet is lacking enough calcium, talk to your health care provider about supplements. **Here are some guidelines:**

✓ **Dose.** Adults should get 1,000-1,200 mg/day, preferably in a divided dose, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). To avoid side effects, increase the dose gradually and do not exceed recommended amounts. Read labels carefully.

✓ **Type.** Most reputable brands work equally well, but pay attention to the amount of "elemental" calcium, as this is the part the body absorbs. Chewable and liquid forms tend to dissolve well. Calcium carbonate is absorbed better with food, while calcium citrate can be taken anytime.

✓ **Safety.** Choose brands that include the USP mark on their labels. It indicates that the U.S. Pharmacopoeia has verified a supplement's safety and contents. Supplements without this symbol may contain high levels of toxic metals.

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DR. ZORBA'S LONGEVITY CORNER

ALCOHOL ISSUES According to research from the *Archives of General Psychiatry*, nearly 1 out of 3 adults have had some alcohol problem in their lifetime. Many who suffer from these problems actually have psychiatric problems such as anxiety, depression or mood disorders, while others have problems with drug abuse. What's surprising is that only 1 out of 4 received any professional help, and when they did, it was often nearly eight years after they started having the problem. **The bottom line:** If you know someone who needs help, help them get it. If you're the one who needs help, ask for it.

Eat to Beat Stress ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

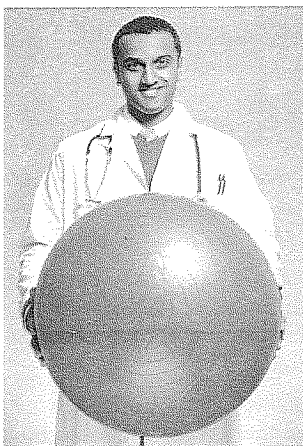
The holidays are coming — along with food-filled parties and family gatherings. An abundance of rich food and drink, along with the assortment of holiday commitments, can tempt you to overeat. However, eating poorly can make you feel tired, irritable and stressed. How can you eat to lower your holiday stress? *Here are some tips from the American Dietetic Association:*

- 1 Start with a nutritious breakfast of whole grains, fruit, dairy and good sources of protein such as an egg, lean meat or nut butter.
- 2 Have a healthy snack before a party or holiday dinner. This will ease your hunger and make it easier to eat sensible portions.
- 3 Skip alcohol and enjoy sparkling water with a twist of lemon or lime.
- 4 While shopping, bring snacks such as fruit, and drink plenty of water.
- 5 Eat slowly. Take time to enjoy good conversation too.
- 6 Take healthy treats to parties, such as nuts or a fruit plate.
- 7 Allow yourself special treats. Just try to balance your calorie intake with physical activity to prevent weight gain.



Final thought: Aim for a realistic number of events and responsibilities during the holidays — stress and exhaustion can lead to overeating. Keep in mind that your main goal is to enjoy the company of family and friends.

DIABETES: Know the Basics



You may have heard that type 2 diabetes is at epidemic levels, and you may wonder if you are at risk. But what *is* diabetes?

When you eat, your body breaks down food into glucose (sugar) for fuel. To help your body use glucose, your pancreas produces insulin. Diabetes occurs when your pancreas can't make insulin (Type 1), or your body can't use insulin properly (Type 2).

Type 1 (formerly called juvenile diabetes) usually begins anytime from birth to your late 30s. With type 1 diabetes, you must take supplemental insulin.

Type 2 diabetes (90-95 percent of cases) usually occurs in people over age 35, but is increasingly common in children and teens. Risk factors include older age, obesity, family history of diabetes,

gestational (pregnancy-related) diabetes, high blood sugar ("prediabetes"), smoking, high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, sedentary lifestyle, certain medical conditions and certain ethnicities. Type 2 can often be managed with medication, diet, weight loss and exercise. Both types require careful monitoring to help restore normal blood glucose levels.

Symptoms of diabetes may be excessive thirst or hunger, frequent urination, unintended weight loss, blurred vision, slow healing of infections and severe fatigue — although sometimes there are no symptoms at all.

With proper medical treatment and self-care, people with diabetes can live long and healthy lives — and current research promises to improve our understanding and treatment of this disease in the years to come. Ask your health care provider to evaluate and help you reduce your diabetes risk.

SMOKING ■ ■ ■ (continued)

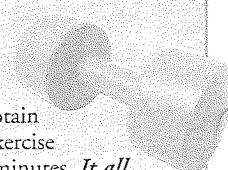
● **Talk with your health care provider about quitting aids.** Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) eases withdrawal by providing nicotine in gums, patches, sprays, inhalers or lozenges. All are effective when used properly. Conditions that may prevent NRT use include pregnancy and heart disease. **Important:** Use only one NRT aid at a time and don't use or smoke tobacco when using NRT. To reduce cravings, ask your health care provider about non-nicotine medications.

● **Consider a combination approach.** Research suggests that your chances of quitting successfully increase when you combine NRT or medication with telephone counseling and lifestyle changes.

The bottom line: Set a quit date and keep it. Quitting smoking is one of the best steps you can take for your health.

MICRO WORKOUTS

Harvard Medical School research has shown that you can obtain health benefits from exercise periods as brief as 10 minutes. **It all adds up!** Try to accumulate a total of 30-45 minutes of moderate exercise (burning 200-300 calories) on most days of the week. People who burn at least 300 calories a day with physical activity live longer than inactive people, according to one long-term study.



Calcium ■ ■ ■ (continued)

✓ **Side effects.** Occasionally, calcium supplements cause gas or constipation. If adding fluids and fiber to your diet doesn't help, try a supplement containing both calcium and magnesium.

✓ **Interactions.** If you take iron pills or prescription medications, or have a history of kidney stones, check with your health care provider before using a calcium supplement.

NEXT MONTH: Test Your Holiday Health IQ