

TOP HEALTH[®]

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

We Care About Your Health

FEBRUARY 2008

✓ CHANGES to Make This Year

Even if you know the basics of healthy living, it's often hard to follow through. Not enough time? Don't know where to begin? *Good news: You can develop good habits by starting small.*



■ Would you believe...

- Walking just one mile a day may reduce your heart disease risk by more than 80 percent.
- Losing 10 pounds can significantly lower your blood pressure.
- Even a loss of two pounds may drop your risk of diabetes.

Get started with these small changes:

✓ **Get moving.** Play with your kids 30 minutes a day. Pace while you're on the phone or on the sidelines at kids' athletic games. Get off the bus one stop early and walk. Do more activities such as yard work and gardening. Aim to walk at least one mile per day.

✓ **Lose some weight.** Buy lower-calorie substitutes for a few of your favorite foods. Avoid food portions larger than your fist. Eliminate 100 calories per day. Flavor food with herbs and spices. *(continued on next page)*

■ DR. ZORBA'S LONGEVITY CORNER

NUTRITION FOR THE EYES To keep your eyes healthy, eat vegetables loaded with yellow pigments known as carotenoids (also called lutein and zeaxanthin). A large study of seniors found that those who ate foods containing these nutrients had a lower risk of age-related macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness. Carotenoid-packed foods include yellow vegetables (such as squash, pumpkin, yellow peppers and carrots) and dark green vegetables (such as spinach, broccoli and zucchini).

"Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right." — Henry Ford

Acid Reflux Relief

If you have frequent heartburn, you know how painful it can be. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a disorder where stomach acids overflow into your esophagus (the tube connecting your throat and stomach), causing discomfort and sometimes serious damage. Your health care provider may prescribe medication for this condition, but lifestyle changes can be equally important. *Try these tips to relieve your discomfort:*

- 1 Use a daily food log to help identify which foods bother you — then eliminate them. Common problem foods include citrus fruits (lemons, oranges, etc.), acidic foods (tomatoes, cranberries, pineapples), vinegar and condiments (ketchup, mustard, pickles), fatty or fried foods, high-fat dairy products, pepper, chocolate, peppermint, caffeine, alcohol and soda.
- 2 Eat four or five small meals a day.
- 3 Eat more fiber — whole grains, fruits and vegetables, beans and nuts.
- 4 Lose excess weight, and don't wear clothes that are tight around the waist.
- 5 Drink water during the day to wash down stomach acids.
- 6 Avoid smoking. *(continued on next page)*

SHARPEN UP. Are you giving your mind a daily workout to keep it nimble? A daily focused task can improve your concentration. Try a crossword, a sudoku number puzzle or mental math to keep your brain in top shape.

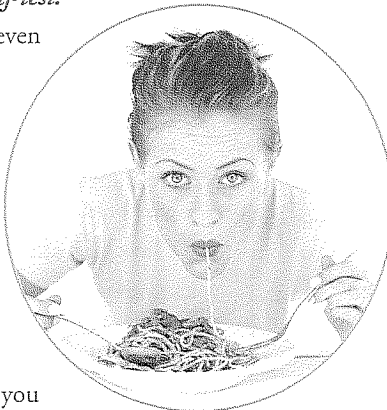


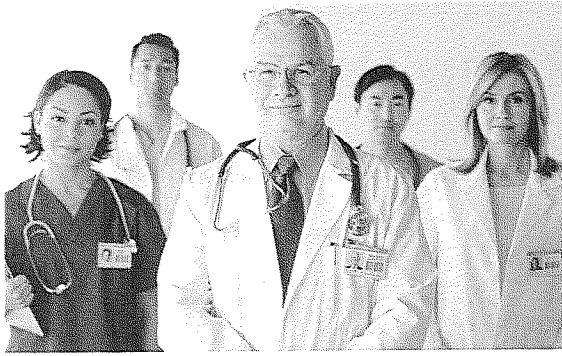
ARE YOU A BINGE EATER?

Most people overeat occasionally, but others go on regular "binges," consuming large amounts of food (frequently desserts or junk food) in a short time. People who binge often do so for emotional reasons rather than hunger. This habit can lead to weight gain and health problems. *Concerned? Take this self-test:*

- ▶ Do you sometimes eat a large amount of food, even when you're not really hungry?
- ▶ Do you feel the need to eat alone because you're embarrassed about how much you eat?
- ▶ During a binge, do you eat more quickly than usual?
- ▶ Do you eat until you're uncomfortably full?
- ▶ Do you hide food containers from others?
- ▶ Do you feel your eating is out of control?
- ▶ Have you binged at least twice a week for six months or more?

If you answered "yes" to many of these questions, you might have a problem with binge eating. Weight loss will be difficult until you get this behavior under control. Talk with your health care provider, who may refer you to a psychiatrist, psychologist, nutritionist or other professional. With some expert assistance, you can adopt healthier eating patterns.





Health Care Provider G·L·O·S·S·A·R·Y

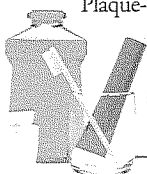
Health care today offers a diverse range of trained patient care professionals. *Here's how to tell one from another when considering your own needs:*

- **MD** — *Medical Doctor*, licensed to practice medicine and surgery and prescribe medications.
- **DO** — *Doctor of Osteopathy*, trained and licensed similarly to MDs, but often with more of a “whole person” approach, emphasizing primary care and preventive health care. DOs receive special training in the body’s system of nerves, muscles and bones, helping them understand how illness or injury in one part of the body can affect another.
- **PA** — *Physician’s Assistant*, must be supervised by an MD or DO; may perform many of the same duties as a physician as determined by the laws in each individual state.
- **NP** — *Nurse Practitioner*, a nurse with a graduate degree in advanced practice nursing; can prescribe medications in some states.
- **RN** — *Registered Nurse*, has a college degree in nursing; may specialize in a particular condition or type of treatment.
- **LPN** — *Licensed Practical Nurse*, a graduate of a vocational nursing school; must be supervised by an RN or physician.

All these providers can deliver high-quality care. Your choice may be based on the nature of your health concerns, personal preference or recommendations. Cost and availability might also be considerations. Whatever your needs, there’s likely a health care provider out there who’s just right for you.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEART: SEE YOUR DENTIST

Plaque-based gum disease may hurt your heart. Research is under way to confirm that periodontal disease causes vascular problems. **Bottom line:** Take good care of your teeth and gums — it could reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.



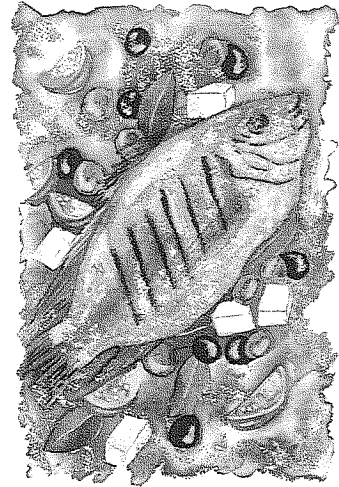
The Mediterranean Diet

Healthy eating doesn’t mean the end of satisfying and delicious meals. Residents of the Mediterranean region, particularly Greece and Southern Italy, enjoy health perks while delighting their taste buds.

This diet, combined with exercise, may decrease your weight, blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, blood sugar and insulin levels — and may even lower your risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease. Heart attack survivors can also reduce their risk of further heart disease. *Ease into this healthy eating plan with these steps:*

- **Eat fish** (not fried) at least once a week. Try tuna, salmon, shellfish and sardines.
- **Enjoy seven to 10 servings** of fruits and vegetables daily. Feast on tomatoes, broccoli, peppers, spinach and eggplant.
- **Include low to moderate amounts** of dairy products. Choose skim or non-fat milk varieties.
- **Keep nuts handy** — try a daily handful of almonds, walnuts or brazil nuts.
- **Have red meat** only a few times a month. Substitute with low to moderate amounts of chicken and fish. Eat high-protein beans and lentils and no more than four eggs a week.
- **Choose whole grain** pasta and breads.
- **Use healthy fats** such as olive or canola oil instead of butter or margarine. Try olive oil for salad dressing and flavored oil for pasta. Be careful — even healthy oils contain a lot of calories, so use them sparingly.

The Mediterranean diet is one choice for healthy eating; check out www.oldwayspt.org/med_pyramid.html for a diet pyramid.



Reflux ... (cont'd)

- 7 Don’t use medications that worsen reflux. Ask your health care provider for alternatives.
- 8 Raise the head of your bed by 4 to 6 inches — lift it with blocks or use a wedge pillow designed for reflux.
- 9 Stop eating two to three hours before bedtime to avoid nighttime heartburn.
- 10 Chew gum after meals. Stick with these tips that can bring big relief — and kiss heartburn goodbye.

CHANGES ... (cont'd)

✓ **Eat more fruits and vegetables.** Add fruit to cereal and vegetables to sandwiches or pasta sauce. Freeze grapes or watermelon wedges for a cool, sweet treat. Bake with applesauce instead of oil. Try something new such as star fruit or bok choy.

Start with one or two changes, then add more a few weeks later. Soon you may develop the confidence to tackle bigger challenges, such as quitting smoking. *A healthier you could be right around the corner.*

For more ideas, go to www.smallstep.gov or www.americaonthemove.org.

NEXT MONTH: A Cancer You Can Prevent