

TOP HEALTH[®]

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

We Care About Your Health

MARCH 2008



WATCH THOSE LIQUID CALORIES

A recent study found that people get 22 percent of their calories from beverages and that people who drink beverages with calories tend to eat more. **TIP:** If you're trying to lose weight, choose sugar-free beverages or water, which has zero calories.

4 Quick At-Work Exercises

Our bodies are designed to move, so sitting or standing in one place all day can make you ache. What can you do? Use brief breaks for some simple moves that can bring relief. You can stretch between phone calls, while your computer is loading a file or between tasks. Just 5 minutes of movement per hour will help you feel more calm and productive. **Get going with these ideas:**

1 Stretch. Relieve tension and stiffness with some stretching. **Try this one:** Lift your shoulders toward your ears, then rotate them backwards and down. For other exercises, click on "Musculoskeletal System" at <http://dohs.ors.od.nih.gov/exercises.htm>.

2 Pump it up. Exercise your heart by taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Go for a quick walk instead of a coffee break.

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Fast Guide to Fats

Is dietary fat bad for you? Actually, fat is an important part of every cell in your body, and it contributes to healthy hair and skin. But fat has more than double the calories of protein or carbohydrates, so a little goes a long way. **Here's a quick summary of the American Heart Association's recommendations:**

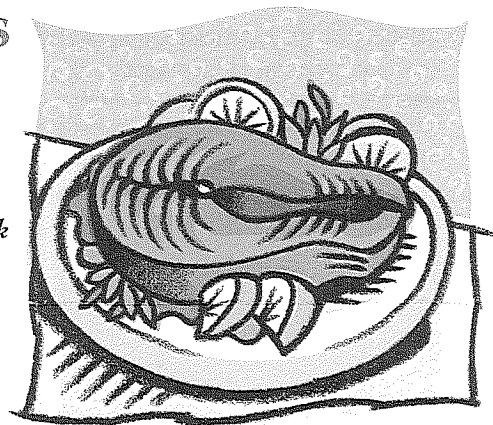
Trans fats. Often listed on labels as "partially hydrogenated," these fats are found in some baked goods, snacks, margarines and especially fried foods.

Trans fats contribute to clogged arteries, so eat as little as possible or avoid them altogether.

Saturated fats. These fats are found in meat and dairy products, as well as palm and coconut oils. Try to limit them to 7 percent of your total calories, since saturated fat is a major factor in unhealthy cholesterol.

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. The best sources of these heart-healthy fats include olive oil, canola oil, avocados and nuts. The omega-3 fatty acids, a special type of polyunsaturated fat found in fish such as salmon and herring, are especially good for your heart.

The bottom line: Try to keep your fat intake to 25 to 35 percent of your total calories. If you stick to mostly mono- and polyunsaturated fats, you'll be doing your heart a big favor.



Colon Cancer: Screening and Prevention

Have you heard the good news? Colorectal cancer rates are dropping as detection methods improve and more people are getting screened.

Getting screened can save your life. Up to 90 percent of the colorectal cancer deaths last year could have been prevented with early detection, according to the STOP Colon and Rectal Cancer Foundation. Colonoscopy is the best test if you've had polyps or have a family history of polyps or cancer.

Other screening methods are available for people at lower risk. Because everyone's risk increases with age, the American Cancer Society recommends that people at average risk begin regular testing after age 50. People at increased risk may need to begin screening earlier. Ask your health care provider about your personal screening needs.

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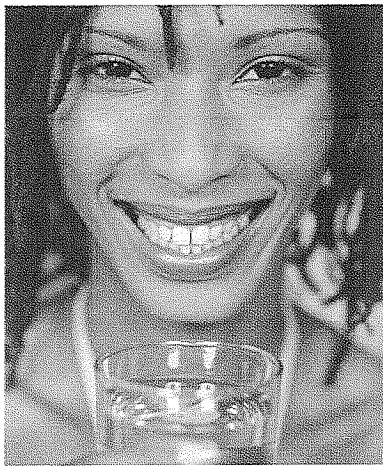
DR. ZORBA'S LONGEVITY CORNER

CEREAL AND YOUR HEART Guys, listen up. A recent study in the Journal of the American Medical Association shows that eating whole-grain breakfast cereals can reduce men's risk of heart failure. Controlling blood pressure and cholesterol, drinking no more than two drinks a day and exercising also help, of course. However, in this study, men who ate one serving a week of whole-grain breakfast cereal lowered their risk by 35 percent; those who ate cereal nearly every day reduced their risk by a whopping 50 percent. So get a spoon and dig in.

WASH AWAY KIDNEY STONES

Kidney stones are common — and often very painful. They strike 12 percent of men and 5 percent of women by age 70. A stone forms when certain substances become too concentrated in the urine. When the stone blocks the flow of urine to the bladder, pain generally starts in the back by the rib cage and travels around to the side or radiates to the groin. Other symptoms can include difficulty urinating, bloody or cloudy urine, and sometimes nausea and vomiting.

Drinking fluids, especially water, can help prevent kidney stones. One of the most common causes of kidney stones is dehydration. The National Kidney Foundation suggests three to four quarts of fluids a day. This is especially important in hot weather or during strenuous physical activity. You can tell if you're drinking enough by checking your urine color — clear or pale yellow means you're well hydrated.



If you've had kidney stones before, these additional steps may help prevent them from coming back:

Don't eat excessive amounts of animal protein. Try eating vegetarian two days a week.

Do cut the salt. Processed food and fast food are high in added salt. Check the sodium content of items you eat regularly, and limit fast food to once or twice a week.

Don't take extra vitamin C, D or calcium supplements if you have a history of kidney stones.

Do follow the advice of your health care provider, who may offer other suggestions.

Solutions for Social Phobia

Many people feel uncomfortable in social situations. For some people, however, this discomfort is a source of overwhelming anxiety and extreme self-consciousness. It's called social phobia, and it's one of the most common anxiety disorders in America.

● **What is social phobia?** People with social phobia (or social anxiety disorder) strongly fear being embarrassed in front of others. They may be anxious in nearly all social settings or only in certain situations such as eating or speaking in public. Unlike ordinary shyness, this condition can seriously affect someone's ability to work, make friends and date.

● **What are the symptoms?** Rapid heartbeat, sweating, trembling, blushing and upset stomach in social situations are common. People with social phobia sometimes panic before social events or simply avoid them altogether. Others turn to alcohol or drugs to try to escape their fear.

● **Who has it?** It generally begins in childhood or adolescence. Unfortunately, most of those affected never seek professional care.

● **What helps?** With better understanding of social phobia, it is more treatable than ever before; both psychotherapy (talk therapy) and medications can be effective. If you suffer the symptoms of social anxiety, ask your health care provider for information and treatment options.

Take heart. Professional assistance can help you break free of the fear and enjoy the parties or social situations you once dreaded.



Cancer ■■■ (continued)

Other steps to lower your cancer risk include:

- Follow a low-fat, high-fiber diet rich in fruits and vegetables.
- Exercise regularly.
- Avoid tobacco and limit alcohol use.
- Get enough calcium and folic acid.
- Talk with your health care provider about daily low-dose aspirin use.

Be smart — protect yourself from colorectal cancer. For more information, call 1-800-4-Cancer or go to www.coloncancerprevention.org.

Exercises ■■■ (continued)

3 **Build strength.** Work your muscles with filled water bottles or resistance bands. While seated and reading e-mails, place one foot on the floor and raise the opposite leg several inches. Gently move the leg up and down a few inches. Do this 10-20 times and then repeat with the opposite leg.

4 **Strike a pose.** Yoga builds flexibility and strength. While sitting, gently turn your head to the side and your torso to the opposite side, then hold for a few seconds. Try other poses from "Free Yoga Lesson" at www.americanyogaassociation.org.

Aim to loosen your neck and shoulders every 20 minutes and walk or stretch every 40 minutes. And try to fit in a regular exercise routine most days of the week.

"Health is the thing that makes you feel that now is the best time of the year." — Franklin Pierce Adams

CAUTION: SNEEZES AHEAD

Get a jump on your seasonal allergy symptoms by starting medication before the sneezing season is in full swing. Some drugs can take up to two weeks to be fully effective. Ask your health care provider when it's best to start your treatment plan.

NEXT MONTH: Laugh Yourself Happy