

Protect Your Immunity



August is Immunization Awareness Month.



Your body's immune system is your No. 1 defender against infection. It protects you daily from exposure to millions of germs (microbes), including bacteria, viruses, parasites and other threats. When germs do invade your body, making you ill, the immune system begins fighting the infection.

For your part, fighting infection requires 2 basic tactics:

- 1. Good hygiene:** Washing your hands properly is an easy, effective way to guard against germs and infections. Wash up thoroughly before preparing or eating food, after coughing or sneezing, after changing a diaper, and after using the toilet. When soap and water aren't handy, use alcohol-based hand-sanitizing gels.
- 2. Vaccinations:** The number of vaccine-preventable diseases keeps growing as researchers learn more about what causes them. Many vaccines are given in childhood, but as adults we still need vaccinations to prevent some illnesses, such as tetanus and influenza, or when traveling abroad to high-risk countries.

Vaccines build immunity by imitating an infection that causes your system to produce antibodies to the disease. Sometimes, after getting a vaccine, the imitation infection can cause minor symptoms such as fever; this is normal and expected as the body builds immunity to the disease.

{ "Don't find *fault*, find a *remedy*." – Henry Ford }

7 Ways to Get More Vegetables on Your Plate



Despite our best intentions, many of us don't meet the recommended minimum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups of vegetables per day. Vegetables are nutrient-rich powerhouses that can help combat type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer. >> *Continued on back.*

Action Plan for Overweight Kids

Being overweight or obese starts early for many children in the U.S. Here's how to help young children slim down:

If your child is diagnosed as overweight or obese, discuss the behavior changes needed to gain weight control. The initial goal is to help kids stop gaining excess weight (beyond normal age-appropriate growth).

Recognize how lifestyle can influence unhealthy weight gain in kids. This includes over-consuming high-calorie, low-nutrient snacks and beverages; lack of physical activity; and excessive sedentary and solitary activities such as streaming videos and texting.



Replace snack foods with healthy options. Provide fruit, vegetable sticks or popcorn packed in handy 1-portion bags – kids tend to eat what they can easily grab.

Cut out fast food. Adopt a nutritious food plan the whole family can enjoy long-term, with an emphasis on home-cooked meals.

Exercise is key. Federal guidelines recommend that children 6 years or older get at least an hour of physical activity every day. To start: Have your child get at least 20 to 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise daily, beyond what they may get at school, working up to an hour every day. **Make time for exercise as a family:** Leave mobile devices behind and find some fun, active family games.



7 Ways to Get More Vegetables on Your Plate » *Continued from front.*

Here are some delicious, fun and creative ways to get enough every day:

1. **Add to eggs:** Omelets are even better when you add red pepper, spinach, mushroom, onion or kale.

2. **Make noodles:** Use a vegetable peeler or spiralizer to turn zucchini, carrots and beets into long noodles. Toss with pesto.



3. **Use as snacks:** A plate of vegetables with dip is the perfect afternoon snack – it's satisfying, filling and delicious.

4. **In pasta sauce:** Add carrots, cauliflower and zucchini to your tomato sauce. You can blend it into a smooth purée or leave it chunky.

5. **Enliven your soup bowl:** Add peas, carrots, celery, parsnips, leeks, onion and broccoli.



6. **Swap mayo for avocado:** Avocado is creamy, full of healthy fats and spreadable. Use it instead of mayonnaise in sandwiches and wraps.



7. **Stack them in sandwiches:** Fill your sandwich with peppers, cucumber, shredded carrot and your favorite leafy greens.



Facts about Home Health Care

Professional in-home health care services meet a broad range of medical needs for patients of all ages returning home from a hospital stay. Home health care or visiting nurse agencies primarily provide skilled nursing, rehabilitation therapies and case management. For example, they aid:

- » Patients recovering from surgery or injuries.
- » Patients needing complex treatments involving medical equipment and/or medication monitoring.
- » Mothers and their newborns needing nursing assistance.
- » People with chronic diseases and disabilities needing careful monitoring but who don't want or need to enter a skilled care facility.

Most employee health care plans do not include home medical care benefits. A few may offer limited coverage for skilled nursing or short-term, medically necessary care.



When choosing a home health care agency:

- » Have your hospital or health care provider recommend a suitable agency.
- » Study the agency's services, eligibility requirements and fees.
- » Get a written statement explaining the specific services, costs and payment plan options for your prescribed home care.
- » Ask if the home care nurses or therapists will evaluate your home care needs and consult with your provider as needed.
- » Know the agency's procedure for handling emergencies.
- » Request feedback from prior patients of the agency, preferably a formal satisfaction survey.

Coffee Questions



Can drinking coffee be part of a healthful lifestyle? Several recent studies support drinking coffee for health benefits.

Coffee is now associated with a lower risk of developing several diseases, including: type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, colon cancer, liver cancer and cirrhosis, and a lower rate of depression in women. **Note:** Research hasn't established that coffee causes reduced risk.

Several years ago, drinking too much coffee was linked to high blood pressure; newer research shows it may **improve** blood pressure. Heart disease? In 2013, a review of 36 studies covering a million-plus people found even heavy coffee drinking did not raise cardiovascular disease risk – and 3 to 5 cups daily provided protection (dependent on the individual and how they metabolize coffee, which is based on genetics).

Can coffee help improve longevity? In 2015, the Harvard School of Public Health reported that coffee drinkers have a lower mortality rate than non-coffee drinkers and are less likely to die prematurely from strokes, heart disease, diabetes, suicide and neurological diseases. The study followed 20,000 non-smoking nurses and doctors for 30 years.

Can I drink as much caffeinated coffee as I want? An average cup has about 100 mg of caffeine. More than 400 mg daily may interfere with sleep and cause anxiety, nervousness, digestive trouble and frequent urination.

The studies listed here are based on 1, 8-ounce serving. You generally don't need to drink lots of coffee to achieve health benefits. **And you don't need to drink caffeinated brew – benefits were also seen with decaf coffee.**

The healthy ingredient in coffee is probably its rich supply of antioxidants (nutrients and enzymes) that scientists believe may help fight chronic diseases by reducing oxidation in the body.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/17V8tools.

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