



Help Prevent Medical Errors

Thousands of Americans die each year as a result of medical errors.

Common errors include medication mix-ups, unnecessary blood transfusions, health care facility-contracted infections, patients not reporting side effects and inadequate patient preparation before and after surgery.

The places where errors most often occur are in hospital patients' rooms, operating rooms, emergency units, delivery rooms, primary providers' offices and intensive care units.

The single best way you can help prevent errors is to stay closely involved in every decision of your medical care. For example:

Keep your health care officially coordinated by a single practitioner.

When picking up a prescription, always ask the pharmacist: *Is this what my health care provider prescribed?*

Before surgery, make sure that you, your provider and surgeon all agree on exactly what will be done.

During a hospital stay, ask your medical team what medicines you will be taking, how much, how often and why; that way you can match these instructions against the hospital staff that administers your drugs.

Don't assume everyone knows everything they need to, and don't hesitate to speak up. If possible, enlist someone who can advocate for you at appointments or during hospital stays.

The way to minimize medical errors is for providers, hospital administrations, governments, health plan providers and patients to stay aware and commit to a safer system at all levels.

*"In health there is freedom.
Health is the first of all liberties."*

— Henri-Frederic Amiel

Overview: The Omegas

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Dietary fat is an essential part of our diet. But, some types of fat are better for you than others. Here's what you need to know about the omega fatty acids.



We need omega-3 fats for our bodies to function properly. We have to get omega-3s from food, since our bodies can't make them.

There are 3 main types of omega-3 fats:

DHA and EPA from fish such as salmon and trout (eat 2 to 3 times a week), and **ALA** from plant-based sources such as walnuts, flax and canola. Because there are limited sources for omega-3, many people do not get enough in their diet.

>> Adequate omega-3 intake is associated with less inflammation. Lowering inflammation is important if you have an inflammatory condition such as Crohn's, colitis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout or psoriasis. Chronic inflammation is also linked to an increased risk of cancer.

>> Omega-6 fats are also essential for good health. However, they're in many foods, so North Americans don't tend to be short on omega-6s. Food sources include: all vegetable oils (grapeseed, sunflower, corn, soybean, etc.), nuts, seeds, salad dressings, dairy, meat, whole grains and any foods made with oil.

>> Omega-9 fats are neutral or beneficial for health. They are monounsaturated fats and are plentiful in olive, canola and avocado oils.



The single most important thing you can do to improve your omega fat ratio is to switch your oils. Instead of omega-6-rich sunflower, corn or soybean oils, switch to olive, canola or avocado oils, which are higher in omega-9 fats, and use omega-3-rich flaxseed oil for salads.



Cancer Update: Facts and Figures

The overall cancer death rate in the U.S. is declining, and the number of cancer survivors is increasing, according to the American Cancer Society's 2016 cancer report. A major reason for the decline is **early detection**. Recent statistics:

- » **Death rates in the U.S. for the 4 most common cancers** – prostate, lung, colorectal and breast – and all cancers combined have been gradually declining (since 1998). Death rates are also declining for brain, leukemia, ovary, stomach and bladder cancers.
- » **The No. 1 cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. is lung cancer**, in both men and women, primarily due to smoking.
- » **Excess body fat is connected to 11 cancers**, and considered the **second leading risk factor for cancer** after smoking.
- » **Alcohol consumption likely causes several forms of cancer**, including those of the larynx, esophagus, liver, colon, rectum and female breast.

Cancer treatment is most successful when the disease is found early. Discuss cancer screening with your health care provider.

Scientists hope their immunotherapy research will eventually lead to a universal cancer vaccine. Meanwhile, a substantial number of cancers could be prevented by not using tobacco, limiting alcohol use and maintaining a healthy weight.



September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

Q: Prostate cancer risks?

A: **Cancer of the prostate is the most common cancer in U.S. men, and the third leading cause of cancer deaths.** It occurs in the walnut-shaped prostate gland beneath the bladder in men. Older age ranks as the No. 1 risk factor; all men older than 50 are at increased risk for developing prostate cancer. A family history of prostate or breast cancer also elevates the risk.

Several other factors may contribute to prostate cancer. For unknown reasons, the cancer starts earlier and occurs more frequently in African-American men. Research also has linked a diet high in fat and low in vegetables to prostate cancer and excess weight to more aggressive disease.

Best ways to reduce risk: Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, lose excess weight and get moderate exercise most days of the week. Ask your health care provider about screening for prostate cancer. *By Elizabeth Smoots, MD*



September is Whole Grains Month.

Ancient Grains for Modern Tables

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



Farro, millet, quinoa and sorghum are all ancient grains, which is the name for cereal crops that have been largely unchanged in the past several hundred years. Here's a variety of nutritious ancient grains to add to your plate.

Farro: This grain is popular in Italy and is related to wheat. It comes in 3 varieties: **farro piccolo** (einkorn), **farro medio** (emmer), and **farro grande** (spelt). Whole-grain farro berries are high in fiber and are great in soup, risotto and salad. They cook faster if you soak them overnight. You can also try farro pasta.



Millet: This tropical, yellow-hued grain is a small seed. It cooks to a grainy or creamy consistency, depending on cooking time and how much liquid is added. Enjoy as a morning porridge with cinnamon and raisins, or as part of a pilaf mixed with quinoa. Millet is gluten-free and high in magnesium.

Quinoa: This Peruvian native is also a seed rather than a true grain. Quinoa cooks quickly (15 minutes), is a complete protein and is high in iron and B-vitamins. It's also gluten-free. It comes in tan, black and red varieties.



Sorghum: This gluten-free grain is popular in Africa and is the 5th most important cereal crop globally. The small circular orbs are about the size of peppercorns and hold their shape well when cooked. The nutty flavor makes sorghum perfect for savory side dishes. **Bonus:** Sorghum pops like popcorn when heated with oil.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/17V9tools.

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