

For Your Health



A Newsletter for Providence Associates

JANUARY 2009



January is...
GLAUCOMA
Awareness Month



What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually steal sight without warning. In the early stages of the disease, there may be no symptoms. Experts estimate that half of the people affected by glaucoma may not know they have it.

Vision loss is caused by damage to the optic nerve. This nerve acts like an electric cable with over a million wires. It is responsible for carrying images from the eye to the brain.

There is no cure for glaucoma—yet. However, medication or surgery can slow or prevent further vision loss. Early detection is vital to stopping the progress of the disease.

Everyone is at risk for glaucoma. However, glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness among African-Americans. It is six to eight times more common in African-Americans than in Caucasians. People at high risk for glaucoma should get a

complete eye exam, including eye dilation, every one or two years. Other possible risk factors include, nearsightedness, diabetes, hypertension and central corneal thickness.

Early detection, through regular and complete eye exams, is the key to protecting your vision from damage caused by glaucoma.

It is important to have your eyes examined regularly. Your eyes should be tested:

- before age 40, every two to four years
- from age 40 to age 54, every one to three years
- from age 55 to 64, every one to two years
- after age 65, every six to 12 months

Anyone with high risk factors, should be tested every year or two after age 35.

Source: Glaucoma Research Foundation, www.Glaucoma.org



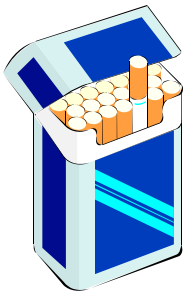
FISCAL FITNESS:

If you're a smoker and you want to quit, here's the bottom line...

It's hard to kick the habit. But thinking about how much money you'll save and what else you could buy with that money might make it easier. How many tanks of gasoline could you buy, for instance, if you gave up smoking?

# of Packs per day	Cost per year*	Gas it could buy*
1	\$1,642.50	469 gallons
1 ½	\$2,463.75	704 gallons
2	\$3,285.00	938 gallons

**Based on \$4.50 per pack of cigarettes and \$3.50 per gallon of gas.*



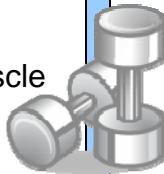
When you quit smoking, the savings start to pile up right away. In fact, if a one-pack-a-day smoker quit and put the \$1,642.50 in an investment account in equal monthly payments earning 5% every year for 25 years (age 40 to age 65, for example), they would have approximately an additional \$81,518 without any effort. That's better than sending it up in smoke, for sure.

Source: Hope Health Letter, Vol. 28, No. 11

Staying Strong!

Weight training can stem the muscle loss people experience with age, usually beginning in their 40's for women and in their 60's for men. Strong muscles keep bones healthy and help control body weight, since muscles burn more calories than fat. Aerobic exercise will also be more enjoyable because you're more fit and less prone to injuries. Start with a weight that you can lift easily for eight to twelve repetitions. Never increase the weight by more than 10% a week, and always take at least one day off between training sessions. Check with your doctor if you have been inactive for a long while before starting a weight regimen.

Source: Hope Health Letter, Vol. 28, No. 11



THE POWER OF Parsley

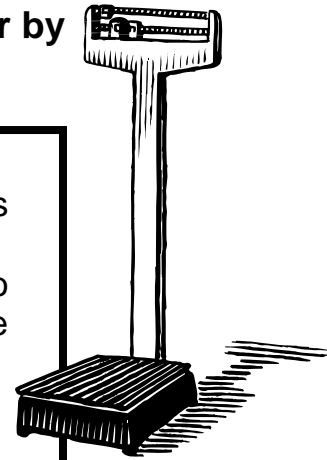


A good source of potassium, folic acid, and vitamins C and A, parsley can add flavor when you want to limit seasoning with salt. It's excellent in soups, sauces, salad dressing, and with most vegetables. The flat leaf (Italian) variety has a stronger flavor. To preserve the valuable vitamins and minerals in parsley, chop the herb just before using and add it to hot foods at the last minute.

Source: Hope Health Letter, Vol. 26 No. 12

Weight Management:

Reducing Feelings of Hunger by Working with Your Body



Few pleasures rival the satisfaction of enjoying good food when we are hungry. Since eating is essential for survival, Mother Nature has endowed us with a strong urge to consume tasty food. Hunger tells your body that you need calories and nutrients, and motivates you to make finding a meal your highest priority. Hunger is not meant to be ignored, and trying to work while you are hungry can make you cranky, tired and distracted.

People trying to control their weight will usually be more successful (and feel better) if they learn to work with their bodies. Cultivating good eating habits must be accompanied by an attempt to lead a balanced life. Here are some of the ways lifestyle is related to feelings of hunger, and suggestions for reducing their power over your eating behavior.

Food Choices

You might think a calorie is a calorie, but your body thinks differently. Some foods make your body think it has had a satisfying meal, while others don't seem to connect with hunger level the way they should. Foods high in fiber, such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains, lead to more stomach fullness than foods high in fat and lower in volume. Warm, broth soups and big delicious salads help you feel satisfied with fewer calories.

Sleep Habits

Even a single night of missed sleep is accompanied by a rise in ghrelin (a hormone that makes you feel hungry) and a higher intake of calories. Chronic sleep deprivation has become more common over the past several decades, and some researchers wonder if it might be one of the



reasons why obesity rates are rising in many countries.

Chronic Feelings of Excess Stress

A lack of relaxation and chronic high levels of stress change your biochemistry along with your appetite. Stress not only interferes with hunger and appetite, but may leave people with less time to shop and plan healthful meals, so they grab whatever is near, with less thought for its nutritive value.



Physical Activity Level

Regular physical activity can reduce hunger by improving sleep quality and reducing feelings of stress. It improves blood sugar regulation and blood lipid levels, thus reducing chronic disease risk while normalizing hunger and appetite.

Source: Fitness Management Magazine



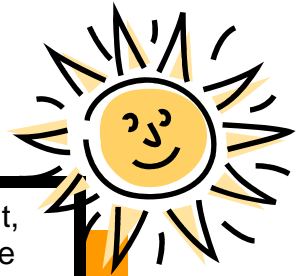
NATURAL Cold Remedies

Source: Dr. Weil, www.drweil.com

If you have a cold:

- **REST** - Get plenty of rest. Lack of sleep and too much stress can make the body weak.
- **WATER** - Stay hydrated which keeps nasal passages moist, making them better defenders against viruses.
- **VITAMIN C** - Vitamin C functions as a powerful antioxidant that has a role in the repair and regeneration of tissues. It may also support healthy immune function.
- **ASTRAGALUS** - This is an antiviral and immunity-enhancer.
- **GINGER-ROOT TEA** - Ginger helps to clear congestion.

VITAMIN D



A lack of vitamin D, which is absorbed primarily through exposure to sunlight, helps boost the risk of heart attacks and strokes, new research finds. "There are a whole array of studies linking increased cardiovascular risk with vitamin D deficiency," noted Dr. James H. O'Keefe, director of preventive cardiology at the Mid America Heart Institute in Kansas City. "It is associated with major risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes and stiffening of the left ventricle of the heart and blood vessels. Inflammation is really important for heart disease, and people with vitamin D deficiency have increased inflammation."

Vitamin D is well known as the "sunshine vitamin" because human skin makes the nutrient upon exposure to sunlight. Only 10 minutes of exposure to sunlight between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. each day will be enough for Caucasians to reach the recommended level, experts say. People with darker skins will need somewhat longer exposure. Sunscreen can also block vitamin D production, the experts add. People must balance the risks and benefits of sun exposure, however. "A little bit of sunshine is a good thing, but the use of sunscreen to guard against skin cancer is important if you have more than 15 to 30 minutes of intense sunlight exposure," O'Keefe noted.

Source: Health Day News
For the full article visit: www.healthday.com



Chicken Fajita Wraps

Sliced chicken, tenderized in lime juice, combines with a spicy sour-cream sauce in this tasty wrap. Serve with Vinegary Coleslaw and Spiced Pinto Beans. Makes 2 servings

ACTIVE TIME: 30 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes

EASE OF PREPARATION: Easy

Ingredients:

8 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast, trimmed of fat
1 tablespoon lime juice
1/4 teaspoon salt, divided
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons reduced-fat sour cream
1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro
Several dashes of hot sauce to taste
1/8 teaspoon ground cumin
1 small onion, thinly sliced
2 whole-wheat tortillas, heated (see Tip)
1/2 cup shredded lettuce
1 plum tomato, thinly sliced

1. Preheat broiler.
2. Place chicken in a shallow dish and sprinkle with lime juice, 1/8 teaspoon salt and pepper. Let stand at room temperature for 10 minutes.

3. Whisk sour cream, cilantro, hot sauce, cumin and the remaining 1/8 teaspoon salt in a small bowl.
4. Place the chicken and onion on a lightly oiled baking sheet and broil for 3 to 5 minutes. Turn the chicken over and stir the onion. Broil until the chicken is no longer pink in the middle, 3 to 5 minutes more. Transfer to a cutting board and cut into thin slices.
5. To assemble wraps: Place the tortillas on a work surface or plate. Top each with half of the chicken, onion, lettuce and tomato. Top each with half of the sour cream mixture and roll into wraps. Serve immediately.

***TIP*:** Wrap tortillas in barely damp paper towels and microwave on high for 30 to 45 seconds.

NUTRITION INFORMATION:

Per serving: 299 calories; 7 g fat (1 g sat, 1 g mono); 66 mg cholesterol; 29 g carbohydrate; 28 g protein; 3 g fiber; 529 mg sodium; 346 mg potassium.

*Nutrition bonus: Selenium (30% daily value), Vitamin A (20% dv), Vitamin C (15% dv).

Exchanges: 1 1/2 starch, 1 vegetable, 3 very lean meat

Source: Eating Well, www.eatingwell.com

❄️ Preventing Winter Dry Skin ❄️

Unfortunately, winter is the season for dry skin and chapped lips because lower air temperatures and low humidity result in drier air. The dryness is made worse by forced, hot-air heating in homes and offices. The dry air causes skin to lose more moisture and become itchy. As we age, winter dryness becomes worse because the natural oil layer in our skin (which protects it from losing moisture) is depleted. Frequent baths or showers further remove this protective oil layer, and the cycle of winter-dry skin continues.

Flaky Means Dry Skin, Right?

The most common cause of itchiness (without a rash) is dry skin. In fact, the most common symptom of dry skin is that itchy feeling, not the dry-skin flakes. Just because your skin is flaky, doesn't mean it's dry. A common example is seborrhea, a skin condition where the skin is flaky and oily, not dry.

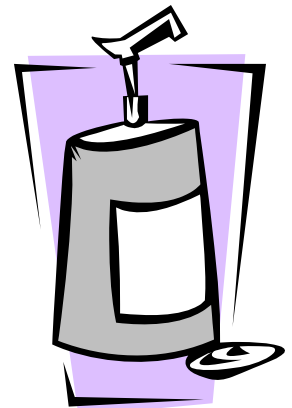
Stop the Itch!

If your skin is itchy for no obvious reason, try using a moisturizer before visiting your health-care professional. You don't need to use fancy or expensive moisturizer. Sometimes simpler is better because "special" added ingredients may not result in any benefit to your skin, even though the hype of the product may sound great!

The Moist Skin Recipe

Sometimes your doctor will have to prescribe a medication to help heal dry skin, but for the common, easier-to-help causes of the "winter itch", here are some suggestions to stop that scratching:

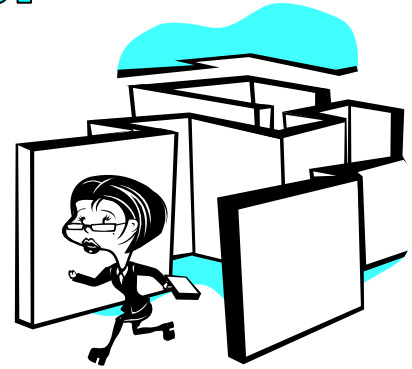
- Creams are best for the really rough areas such as elbows, knees, hands and feet.
- Try not to use bath oils because they don't stay on the skin very long and make the tub slippery and more dangerous.
- Apply a moisturizer after you take a bath or shower. It's often best to take a bath or shower before you go to bed. Cold dry air tends to cause the moisture on your skin to evaporate, setting up a cycle of drier skin.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid long showers or baths, and use warm water, not hot.
- Wear gloves when washing dishes.
- Consider getting a humidifier during the heating season.
- Don't lick chapped lips because this will lead to even more fluid loss and more lip cracking.



If these measures don't stop the itch in a week or two, or if you notice any red rashes or patches, then schedule a visit with your health-care professional.

Source: Discovery Health, www.health.discovery.com

Stress Less in the Office: How Not to Annoy your Co-Workers



You'll go a long way toward creating a pleasant workplace if you strive to be courteous and thoughtful of others. Online job surveys identified the following as the most annoying office habits:

1. **Loud talking**, laughing, and playing voicemail over speakerphone.
2. **Strong perfume & cologne**, body odors or bad breath.
3. **Coming to work sick** and spreading germs.
4. **Being messy** in common places and careless with equipment.
5. **Whining, making excuses**, and reacting defensively.
6. **Talking too much about your personal life** or non-work topics.
7. **Excessive personal phone calls** or use of the internet.
8. **Personalized cell phone ring tones** and interruptions.
9. **Tapping pencils, clicking pens**, and other noisy habits.
10. **Rude or sarcastic responses** and always being late.

If you choose to confront an annoying co-worker, find out first if you are the only one bothered and if you can do something to avoid being affected. Be honest, constructive, and let the person know how you are being affected. Be clear about what you want, and pick the right time and place for conversation. In all likelihood, the person is unaware of the impact of his or her behavior.

Source: Hope Health Letter, Vol. 28, No. 12

The "**For Your Health**" Newsletter is produced by The Providence Hospital Wellness Institute.

The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your personal health care providers - not to replace it. Before making any changes in your diet, exercise, or regular health maintenance schedule, consult your doctor.
