



YOUR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

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Fight Back by Kicking the Salt Habit

An important part of healthy eating is choosing foods that are low in salt (sodium chloride) and other forms of sodium. Using less sodium is key to keeping blood pressure at a healthy level.

Most Americans use more salt and sodium than they need. Some people, such as African Americans and the elderly, are especially sensitive to salt and sodium and should be particularly careful about how much they consume. Most Americans should consume no more than 2.4 grams (2,400 milligrams) of sodium a day. That equals 6 grams (about 1 teaspoon) of table salt a day. For someone with high blood pressure, the doctor may advise less. The 6 grams includes all salt and sodium consumed, including that used in cooking and at

the table. When buying prepared or canned food, check the label for sodium content.

Before trying salt substitutes, you should check with your doctor, especially if you have high blood pressure. These contain potassium chloride and may be harmful for those with certain medical conditions.

— Source: *National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute*



Caring for you and about you



Want to Lower Stress? Try (Sugarless) Gum

Researchers from Australia and England found that in moments of stress, gum chewers felt less anxious and had 18% less cortisol (a stress hormone) in their saliva. "Chewing increases blood flow to the brain, which may make us feel more alert, and it may also distract us from stressors," says study co-author Andrew Scholey, Ph.D., director of the Centre for Human Psychopharmacology at Swinburne University in Melbourne, Australia.

— Source: Centre for Human Psychopharmacology at Swinburne University

Emergency Preparedness Update Your First-Aid Kit

It's smart to keep a first-aid kit in your home and one in your car. The American Red Cross recommends that kits for a family of four include:

- 2 absorbent compress dressings (5 x 9 inches)
- 25 adhesive bandages (assorted sizes)
- 1 adhesive cloth tape (10 yards x 1 inch)
- 5 antibiotic ointment packets (approximately 1 gram)
- 5 antiseptic wipe packets
- 2 packets of aspirin (81 mg each)
- 1 blanket (space blanket)
- 1 breathing barrier (with one-way valve)
- 1 instant cold compress

- 2 pair of non-latex gloves (size: large)
- 2 hydrocortisone ointment packets (approximately 1 gram each)
- Scissors
- 1 roller bandage (3 inches wide)
- 1 roller bandage (4 inches wide)
- 5 sterile gauze pads (3 x 3 inches)
- 5 sterile gauze pads (4 x 4 inches)
- Oral thermometer (non-mercury/non-glass)
- 2 triangular bandages
- Tweezers
- First-aid instruction booklet

— Source: American Red Cross



Nutrition Tips How Much Water Do We Need?

Experts suggest that every day you should drink at least eight cups of fluid. The bulk of it should be water, but remember that low-fat milk, 100% juices, soups, and decaffeinated teas and coffee also contribute to the daily requirement. What about bottled water?

- Bottled water isn't necessarily any healthier than tap water.
- Approximately 25 to 40% of bottled water comes from the same municipal water supply as tap water.
- Tap water can be a good source of fluoride, which is important in preventing tooth

decay. Most bottled water does not have fluoride.

- Bottled water is a better "on the go" beverage choice than soft drinks.
- Bottled water is a convenient and easy way to make sure you drink enough water.

Be sure to drink plenty of water when exercising. Drink before, during and after you work out.

— Source: Michigan Department of Health Services

SENIOR HEALTH UPDATE

Who Lives to Be 100?

According to a recent U.S. Census Bureau report, there were 53,364 people age 100 or older in the country in 2010. Those who were 110 or older made up just 0.6% of the centenarian population in the U.S., the 2010 Census found. Among the report's other findings about America's centenarians:

Nearly 86% lived in an urban area, perhaps for better access to healthcare.

By region, the South had the most, with 17,444, followed by the Midwest, with

13,112; the Northeast, with 12,244; and the West, with 10,564.

Women age 100-plus were slightly more likely to live in a nursing home (35.2% vs. 18.2% for men), while centenarian men were slightly more likely to live in a relative's home (43.5% vs. 28.5% of women).

— Source: U.S. Census Bureau



DID YOU KNOW?



Stay on Top of Asthma Symptoms

Asthma is a chronic disease. This means that once you develop it, you are likely to have it for a lifetime. A chronic condition like asthma requires daily attention. Depending on how severe your asthma is, that may include monitoring your breathing and taking medicine every day, even when you do not have symptoms. Taking care of your asthma must become a routine part of your life, just like monitoring and taking diabetes or blood-pressure medicines are for people with those chronic conditions. If you have asthma, talk with your doctor about the best way to manage the condition.

— Source: National Institutes of Health



KIDNEY HEALTH UPDATE

Diagnosing Kidney Disease

Your doctor can check the health of your kidneys by measuring the amount of protein in your urine. In addition, she can tell how well your kidneys are working with a simple blood test.

Because people with high blood pressure are at increased risk for developing chronic kidney disease, they should be tested for kidney disease. These tests should include the test for protein in the urine. Protein is an important building block in your body. When your kidneys are working properly, they help keep protein in the body.

However, when the kidneys are damaged, protein leaks into the urine. Two positive tests for protein over several weeks is called persistent protein in the urine. This is an early sign of chronic kidney disease.

Your doctor will also order a blood test for creatinine, a waste product from muscle activity. The results of this test can be used to estimate how much kidney function you have.

— Source: National Kidney Foundation



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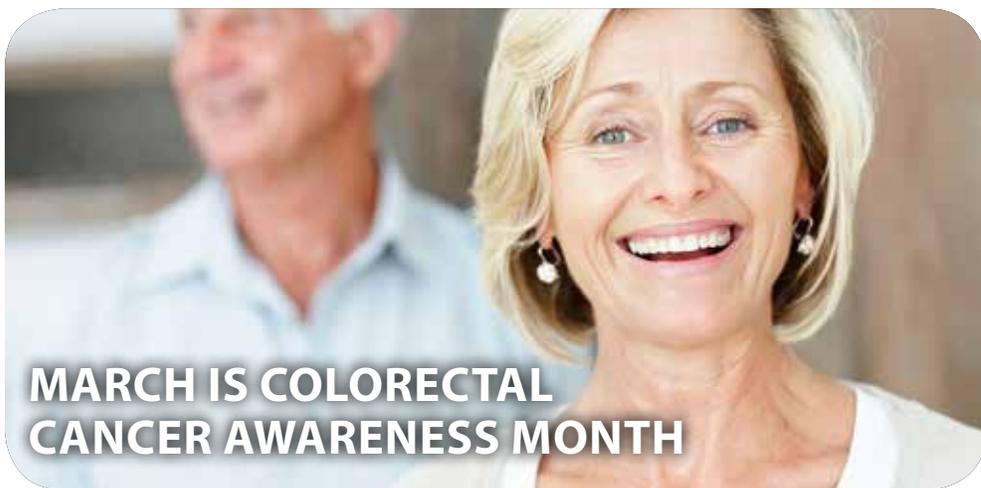
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MARCH IS COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Among cancers that affect both men and women, colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon or rectum) is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. Every year, more than 140,000 Americans are diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and more than 50,000 people die from it. The risk of getting colorectal cancer increases with age. More than 90% of cases occur in people who are 50 years old or older.

If you're age 50 or older, getting a screening test for colorectal cancer could save your life. Screening tests can find precancerous polyps so they can be removed before they turn into

cancer. Screening tests also can find colorectal cancer early, when treatment often leads to a cure.

Precancerous polyps and colorectal cancer don't always cause symptoms, especially at first. That is why having a screening test is so important. Several tests are available, including colonoscopy, high-sensitivity fecal occult blood test, and flexible sigmoidoscopy. Talk with your doctor about which test or tests are best for you.

— Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HEALTH TIP



What Is a Cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of the lens in the eye that affects vision. (The lens is a clear part of the eye that helps to focus light, or an image, on the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye.) Most cataracts are related to aging. Cataracts are common in older people. By age 80, more than half of all Americans have either a cataract or have had cataract surgery. Cataracts also have been associated with UVB sunlight, so wearing sunglasses with complete UV protection is important. A cataract can occur in either or both eyes. It cannot spread from one eye to the other.

— Source: National Institutes of Health

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