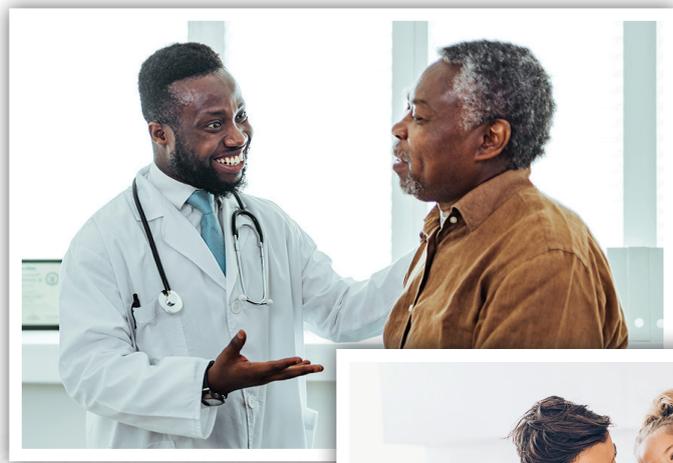


Healthcare

Guide

2026

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Ways to add more fiber to your diet

A healthy diet includes a mix of various vitamins, minerals and nutrients. In fact, those seeking to eat healthy may sometimes be overwhelmed by medical advice recommending an array of items so wide it can seem difficult to squeeze everything in without eating too much food. Thankfully, there are many simple ways to get enough of what you need, and that includes fiber.

The Mayo Clinic notes that a high-fiber diet supports a healthy body in various ways. A high fiber diet can reduce risk for constipation, help people maintain low cholesterol levels, promote bowel health, and slow the absorption of sugar, which can improve blood sugar levels in people with diabetes. With so much to gain from including fiber in your diet, the following are some strategies to do just that.

- Begin the day with fiber. One of the most effective ways to eat enough fiber is to choose the right breakfast cereal. Many breakfast cereals contain ample amounts of fiber, and the Mayo Clinic advises looking for one that contains five grams or more of fiber per serving. Though this is not always the case, and shoppers are urged to read nutrition labels before purchasing a new cereal, products that contain the descriptors whole grain, bran or fiber in the name tend to feature ample amounts of fiber.

- Supplement your cereal. Another simple way to start the day with fiber is to add berries or sliced bananas to your cereal bowl. Blueberries (roughly four grams per cup) and strawberries

(about three grams per cup) are high in fiber and also can up the flavor profile of your morning cereal. The USDA National Database for Standard Reference indicates a medium-sized banana contains roughly three grams of fiber, making any of these, or a combination of them, great additions to a cereal bowl.

- Replace white bread with wheat bread and traditional pasta with whole grain alternatives. Verywell Health notes that wheat bread is generally considered healthier than white bread due in part to its higher fiber content. The same dynamic plays out with whole grain pasta compared to traditional pasta. Traditional pasta is made from refined flour that has the bran removed during processing, whereas the fiber-rich bran is not removed when making whole grain pasta. It can take some getting used to, but opting for whole grain pasta and wheat bread over more traditional but less nutritious alternatives can be a great way to include more fiber in your diet.

- Eat healthier snacks. Nacho lovers might be surprised to learn that tweaking their nachos recipe can be another way to eat more fiber. When making nachos for the big game, prepare them using whole-grain tortilla chips, legumes like black beans or red beans, and fresh vegetables like diced bell peppers. Another way to eat more fiber when snacking is to reach for whole-grain crackers, dried fruits without added sugar or a small amount of nuts in lieu of processed snacks like traditional

potato chips.

Fiber is a key component of a healthy

diet, and there are many simple and flavorful ways to eat more of it each day.



With so much to gain from including fiber in your diet, follow these strategies to do just that.

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Working out after age 50 safely

Exercise is an important component of healthy living at any age. Physical activity helps to maintain a healthy body weight and offers mental benefits like reduced stress and the potential to reduce risk for cognitive decline. But it's important to point out that appropriate exercise for a person at age 20 may look quite different from the right exercise regimen for someone who is 50 or older.

WebMD says exercise is important for quality of life as one ages and is a key to independence. It is important to think of exercise as a tool, and as with all tools, the right ones should be used with a goal to avoid injury. Fitness after 50 should prioritize some practices and avoid others.

- Focus on resistance training. Cardiovascular exercise is important for heart health and general health, but strength training also is essential to counter some of the normal effects of aging. Continuum Care, a private

duty home care service, says aging results in a decline in bone density and muscle mass. Resistance exercise performed several times each week can help combat muscle loss and bone density decline.

- Opt for low-impact activities. Low-



Fitness after 50 should prioritize some practices and avoid others to ensure a safe workout.

impact exercises that involve less jumping and pounding will be easier on the joints. A doctor, physical therapist or athletic trainer can help to customize or adapt activities based on a person's limitations or medical conditions.

- Warm up before working out. Older adults are advised to warm up muscles before exercising to avoid injury, particularly if it has been some time since you last exercised. Harvard Medical School recommends five minutes of brisk walking or time on an elliptical machine to get blood flowing to muscles and make them pliable. After working out, it's advisable to stretch afterwards.

- Switch to interval training. Interval training, which alternates between intense exercises and less demanding "rest" periods, offers greater benefits compared to a consistent exercise pace. Interval training helps burn extra calories and maximizes oxygen

consumption. Interval training may allow for shorter workouts as well.

- Increase the number of rest days. Focusing on recovery after age 50 is important. Tissue takes more time to recover as the body ages, and that may require longer rest periods between workouts.

- Pay attention to what your body is saying. Scripps Health says that even with a doctor or professional trainer guiding workouts, an individual is the best judge if physical activity is too much or too little. Everyone should pay attention to signs of overexertion, such as dizziness, excessive fatigue or chest pain. Other signs of discomfort, such as joint pain, may mean the intensity needs to be dialed down or other exercises chosen.

An exercise regimen may need a reboot after a person turns 50. Modified activities and a slowing of pace can promote a healthy, injury-free lifestyle.

Symptoms of common heart conditions

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading cause of death around the world, indicates the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Globally, CVDs were responsible for around 19 million deaths in 2022. In the United States, heart disease affects around 128 million adults. Learning to recognize symptoms of potential heart conditions can ensure people know when to take action that may prevent further problems down the road.

Heart conditions can present in many ways, and symptoms of various conditions can overlap. This general guide, based on data from the Mayo Clinic and the Cleveland Clinic, serves as a warning and not a diagno-

sis. Those with any sudden, severe or "not right" symptoms are urged to seek immediate medical attention.

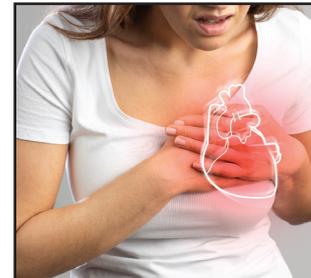
- Coronary artery disease: CAD can result in chest pain (angina), often with exertion. Shortness of breath, fatigue, and pain that may radiate to the arm, jaw, neck, or back are possible.

- Myocardial infarction (heart attack): A heart attack can produce different symptoms in men and women, so it's best to treat any out-of-the-ordinary signs with caution. Intense chest pressure or squeezing; pain spreading to arms, jaw, back, or stomach; shortness of breath; nausea; cold sweats,

lightheadedness; fatigue; or back pain merit medical attention.

- Heart failure: Those experiencing heart failure may have persistent shortness of breath; swelling in legs, feet or abdomen; rapid weight gain from fluid retention; fatigue; and difficulty lying flat due to breathing trouble.

- Arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat): Irregular heartbeat can lead to palpitations or fluttering of the heart; dizziness or fainting; shortness of breath; chest discomfort; and



fatigue.

- Atrial fibrillation (AFib): AFib is an irregular and often rapid heart rhythm that starts in the heart's upper chambers. It can cause fast heart-beat; fatigue; shortness of breath; dizziness; and chest discomfort.

Heart conditions can lead to a variety of symptoms, many of which will overlap. For a thorough diagnosis, it is best to first see a primary care physician, who may then refer patients to a cardiologist.



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Risk factors for heart disease

The World Health Organization reports that ischaemic heart disease, also known as coronary artery disease, is the leading cause of death across the globe. Ischaemic heart disease accounts for 13 percent of the world's deaths, affecting people from all walks of life and every corner of the globe. The WHO also notes that deaths attributed

to beating heart disease is raising awareness of its risk factors among the billions of people across the globe who have at least one of those factors, even if they don't know it. According to the NHLBI, the following are some notable risk factors for heart disease.

- Age: Heart disease risk increases with age, but anyone can develop it. For men, risk increases significantly around age 45, while women's risk increases more rapidly around age 55.

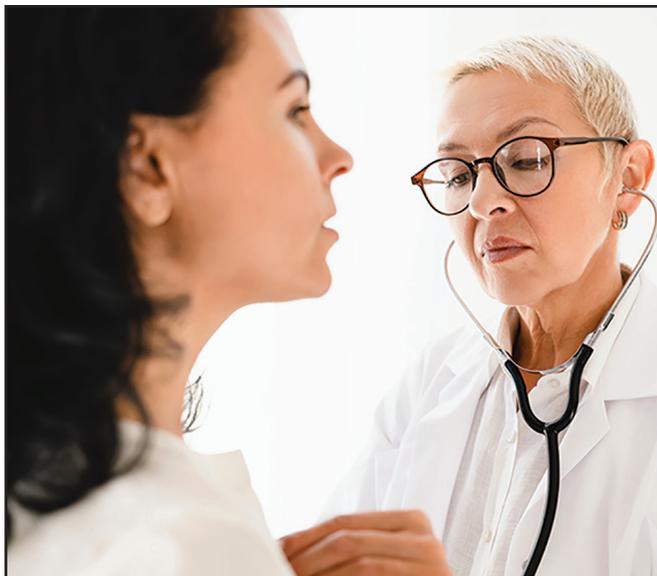
- Environmental/work conditions: Indoor or outdoor air pollution increases risk for heart disease. The NHLBI notes that air pollution may cause or worsen conditions like high blood pressure or inflammation, which are known risk factors for heart disease. Long and/or irregular working hours (55 hours or more per week); exposure to toxins, radiation, secondhand smoke, or other hazards; work-

related stress; and sedentary positions throughout a workday are some work conditions associated with an elevated risk for heart disease.

- Family history/genetics: A father or brother diagnosed with heart disease prior to age 55, or a mother or sister diagnosed before age 65, is a risk factor for heart disease. The NHLBI also notes research has found that some genes are linked to a higher risk of heart disease.

- Lifestyle habits: Unhealthy lifestyle habits that increase heart disease risk include a sedentary lifestyle, excessive alcohol consumption, insufficient sleep over a prolonged period of time, smoking, and poor diet.

These are some heart disease risks that people should be aware of as they seek to improve their overall health. More information about ischaemic heart disease can be found at nhlbi.nih.gov.



Understand risk factors for heart disease

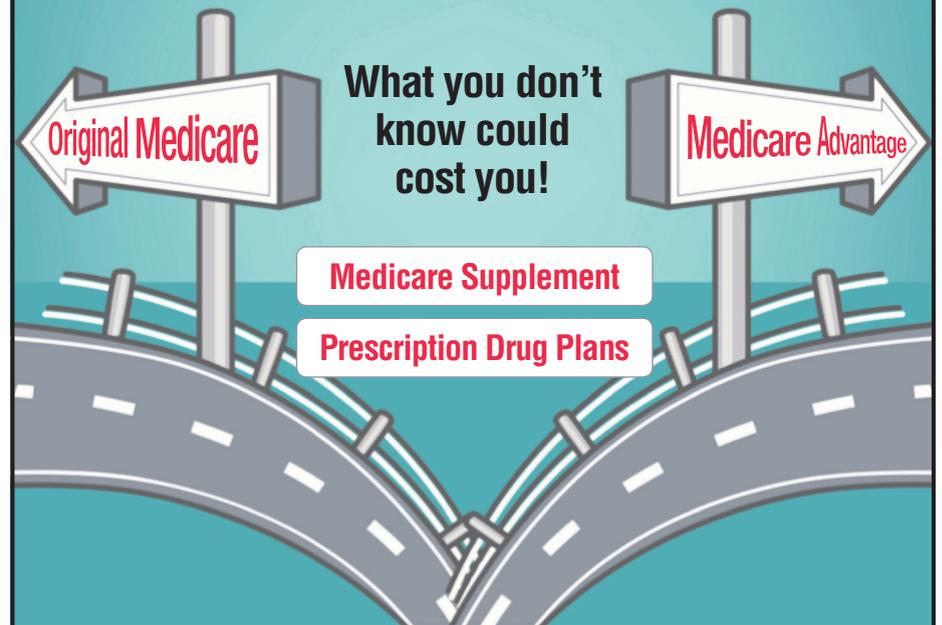
to ischaemic heart disease rose by 2.7 million between 2000 and 2021, the largest uptick in deaths of any disease in the world during that time.

Data from the WHO underscores the threat posed by ischaemic heart disease. But humanity is not helpless against the disease. In fact, many risk factors are within a personal's control, suggesting that a concerted effort to educate the public about the risk factors, and how to avoid them, could have a profound and life-saving impact. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute reports that almost half of all adults in the United States have at least one of three key risk factors for ischaemic heart disease, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada indicates nine in 10 Canadians have at least one risk factor for heart conditions, stroke or vascular cognitive impairment.

One of the more significant hurdles to

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Foods to help you maintain overall health

A nutritious diet is a notable foundation of a healthy lifestyle. When paired with routine exercise, a healthy diet can help people feel better physically and mentally and reduce their risk for various chronic diseases.

Temptation combined with the accessibility and convenience of unhealthy foods makes it easy to compromise a healthy diet. When planning meals and snacks, adults looking to stay a nutritious course can incorporate a variety of low-calorie, nutrient-dense foods into their diets.

The Mayo Clinic notes that most vegetables are naturally very low in calories but high in volume or weight. The weight in many vegetables comes from water and fiber, not calories. The fiber content in vegetables also can make people feel fuller longer, reducing the likelihood of between-meal snacking on unhealthy but convenient foods like potato chips. The Mayo Clinic cites these vegetables as low-calorie options that are high in water and fiber: salad

greens, asparagus, carrots, tomatoes, broccoli and zucchini.

Incorporating more low-calorie and water- and fiber-rich vegetables into your existing diet is not difficult. For example, the Mayo Clinic recommends adding vegetables to pasta dishes as a replacement for meat and cheese. When reaching for a between-meal snack, opt for carrots or broccoli over chips, pretzels or baked goods.

Fruits also make a healthy addition to a daily diet, though the Mayo Clinic warns that some fruits are better than others for people looking for low-calorie, nutrient-dense options. The online medical resource Healthline notes that avocados typically contain 161 calories per 100-gram serving, which equals about half of a medium-sized avocado. That makes avocados a high-calorie fruit compared to some alternatives. Bananas also tend to be higher in calories than other fruits, as Healthline reports a medium-sized banana (105 calories) contains 27 grams of carbohydrates. Avocados and

bananas pack a nutritional punch, but it's important that people seeking low-calorie fruits to add to their diet recognize that each fruit tends to be on the high end in regard to calories.

Fortunately, there are plenty of low-calorie and flavorful fruits that can make great additions to a healthy diet. Strawberries are loaded with flavor and rich in vitamin C and fiber, and a 100-gram serving of this popular fruit contains around 32 calories. Watermelon (30 calories per 100 grams), cantaloupe (34 calories), honeydew melon (36 calories), and peaches (39 calories) are some additional low-



When planning meals and snacks, incorporate a variety of low-calorie, nutrient-dense foods into your diet.

calorie fruits that make great additions to a nutritious diet.

Eating right involves consumption of healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, which tend to be low in calories and nutrient-rich.

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Annual health checkups are so vital that many insurance providers offer once-yearly wellness visits free of charge to policy holders.

Annual checkups are vital to cancer prevention

Annual health checkups are so vital that many insurance providers offer once-yearly wellness visits free of charge to policy holders. It's important for people to get annual physicals even if they feel fit and healthy, as these yearly visits can help uncover issues that may not be producing symptoms. Annual wellness visits also afford adults an opportunity to discuss their lifestyle with their physicians, which can identify areas where changes might be necessary with a goal toward improving long-term health.

Yearly health checkups also provide an opportunity to learn about key screenings, especially those that may detect for cancer. But industry surveys indicate far too many adults aren't taking this vital step. A 2024 survey from the Prevent Cancer Foundation found that 39 percent of surveyed adults had not had a routine medical appointment in the previous 12 months. That's a troubling finding and one that could be more costly than adults realize, as the PCF reports that

as many as 50 percent of cancer cases and half of all cancer deaths are preventable. Screening for cancer, a process that often begins with discussions during annual wellness checkups, is a life-saving and typically non-intrusive way to detect the disease at its earliest, most treatable stage, a point in most cancer instances when symptoms are not necessarily present or noticeable.

Annual checkups also offer patients an opportunity to discuss lifestyle changes that can decrease their cancer risk. Some adults may not recognize that their existing lifestyle is increasing their cancer risk. For example, the American Cancer Society notes that a sedentary lifestyle, a diet lacking in sufficient nutrition and excessive alcohol consumption all can increase a person's cancer risk. Annual wellness visits provide an excellent opportunity for adults to discuss their lifestyle with their physicians, who may recommend some potentially life-saving tweaks that can greatly reduce a person's risk for cancer.

Lifestyle choices that could affect colorectal cancer outcomes

The World Health Organization reports that colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer worldwide, accounting for roughly 10 percent of all cancer cases each year. Colorectal cancer also is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths across the globe. But colorectal cancer may not be as formidable a foe as those statistics suggest.

The American Institute for Cancer Research notes that lifestyle factors are among the main risk factors for colorectal cancer. Such factors are within individuals' control, and when individuals embrace healthy lifestyle choices, they might be able to improve outcomes in relation to a colorectal cancer diagnosis.

Physical activity

Routine physical activity has been linked to a wide range of healthy outcomes, including a reduced risk for chronic diseases and improved mental health. The AICR notes that people who are more physically active have better health outcomes after a colorectal cancer diagnosis than people who live a sedentary lifestyle. While there's no guarantee such outcomes will improve by incorporating physical activity into a daily routine, the benefits of regular exercise are so profound that it can benefit anyone living a sedentary lifestyle to get up and move more frequently.

Diet

The AICR notes that people who eat more whole grains have better health outcomes after a colorectal cancer diagnosis. AICR research also indicates eating three servings of whole grains each day lowers a person's risk of colorectal cancer by 17 percent. The Mayo Clinic notes that whole grains include quinoa, brown rice, oatmeal, whole wheat flour, and popcorn. The AICR cautions that people who have been treated for colorectal cancer have reported difficulty consuming whole grains after treatment, including surgery. In such instances, a gradual reintroduction of whole grains under the supervision of a



Reducing consumption of sugary drinks like soda may improve health outcomes after a colorectal cancer diagnosis.

health professional can help people get back on track and reduce the need to consume refined grains.

Sugary drinks

Sugary drinks have been associated with a number of negative health outcomes, including overweight and obesity, each of which are risk factors for type 2 diabetes. The AICR also indicates people who consume less sugary drinks have better health outcomes after being diagnosed with colorectal cancer. The AICR recommends people consider reducing their consumption of sugary drinks.

Colorectal cancer is a common and often deadly form of the disease. But the right lifestyle choices may make a colorectal cancer diagnosis easier to overcome.

Overbooked kids may be overly stressed, too

Parents often want to give their children every opportunity for success in the present day and the future. In a highly competitive world, some parents may be taking their children's involvement in clubs, sports and academic pursuits a little too far, which could be contributing to a growing problem.

Dubbed "tiger parenting" and "concerted cultivation," these parenting models have been trending, typically among middle-class families. With the end goal to secure their children's future, parents and other caregivers may be filling all available hours with tutoring, sports, music lessons, volunteer work, and much more. Yet a growing body of research suggests that if all of these active pursuits come at the expense of some free time, children may face developmental and psychological ramifications.

According to an analysis from the American Academy of Pediatrics, free play time has decreased by approximately 25 percent since the early 1980s. Conversely,

time spent in structured sports and academic enrichment has steadily surged. Children who participate in too much may develop "hurried child syndrome," a term coined by developmental psychologist David Elkind. Elkind suggests kids are being pushed to grow up too fast by maintaining these jam-packed schedules.

Children who have too much on their plates may increasingly develop psychological concerns. A study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* found children who spend more time in less-structured activities are better positioned to set and reach goals independently. Those who are highly scheduled and structured often have difficulty managing their own time and solving problems without adult assistance.

The pressure to perform and get good grades is the leading cause of stress among teens, according to the Pew Research Center. Sixty-one percent of students report feeling pressure to perform at school. When identity is tied solely to their participation in organized activities,

it can be challenging to develop resilience and handle failure.

Solution Health reports that a 2024 data analysis found a relationship between the

number of enrichment activities a child participated in and their mental health. Researchers found that kids who spend more time in extracurricular activities are

more likely to struggle with anger, depression and anxiety than their peers with fewer such commitments.

Having to run from one activity to the next, and sacrificing meals and sleep to fit it all in, takes its toll. Health experts suggest prioritizing quality over quantity when it comes to the activities that children participate in, and leaving time for free moments. The threshold of overscheduling varies by child, and parents should watch for signs of burn-out.



In a highly competitive world, some parents may be taking their children's involvement in clubs, sports and academic pursuits a little too far, which could be contributing to a growing problem.



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How to reduce digital eye strain

Digital devices have become a ubiquitous component of work, school and leisure. Whether checking email or completing assignments or watching funny videos, screens feature prominently in modern life.

Across the globe, the average person spends an average of six hours and 40 minutes looking at screens each day, according to the digital marketing experts at Backlinko. That screen time is slightly higher for people in the United States, where the average daily screen time is seven hours and three minutes. While there is plenty of data indicating how screen time can affect everything from sleep to waist circumference, it also can impact the eyes.

Screen time eye strain, also known as digital eye strain or computer vision syndrome, is a growing problem thanks to the widespread usage of screens. The American Academy of Ophthalmology says that while screens themselves and the blue light they emit will not damage the eyes permanently, staring at them for long durations can cause temporary discomfort. Symptoms such as dry eyes, blurry vision, headache, and tearing or watery



SAVE YOUR EYES. There are several tips to follow to alleviate digital eye strain.

eyes may occur. That is largely due to the fact that people blink less when they stare at devices. The AAO says the normal blink rate is 15 times per minute, but that frequency is slashed in half when looking at

screens or doing other near work like reading.

Penn Medicine and the AAO offer the following tips to alleviate digital eye strain.

- Get routine eye exams. It is important to stay on top of vision changes. Any symptoms being experienced should be brought to the attention of an eye doctor at a routine eye exam or beforehand if it is problematic. Although digital eye strain may be to blame, there may be another condition at the heart of symptoms.

- Placement of computers is key. While sitting at a desk, the computer screen should be 25 to 30 inches away from the person, or roughly arm's length. The screen also should be placed three to four inches below eye level for optimum comfort and use.

- Take breaks. People should give their eyes occasional breaks, making it a habit to look up from the screen and at an object in the distance. Most professionals recommend the 20-20-20 rule: If you look at a screen for 20 minutes, look away at something at least 20 feet away from you for 20 seconds.

- Wear eyeglasses, instead. People who wear contact lenses know they can increase irritation and dryness. When working on screens, try wearing eyeglasses instead of contacts to reduce these symptoms.

- Aim to reduce glare. Adjust the brightness and contrast of the screen to make viewing more comfortable. Dim the lighting nearby to help reduce eye strain. Individuals also can purchase matte screen filters for their devices.

- Use artificial tears. If dry eyes become a problem with screen usage, then utilize artificial tears to keep eyes lubricated.

Digital eye strain is a consequence of the modern reliance on devices. Luckily, there are ways to help reduce symptoms and feel more comfortable when looking at computers and other devices.

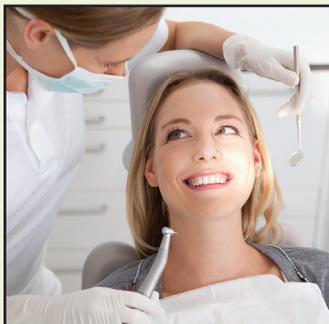
Clean teeth could translate to good heart health

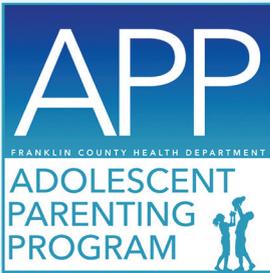
The mouth and the heart are tied in a unique way. Good oral health that aims to prevent gum disease has the potential to positively impact heart health. The Cleveland Clinic points to research that brushing one's teeth may promote a healthier heart as well as healthier teeth. Although taking care of oral health will not eliminate the risk for heart issues down the line, some studies have found that people with gum disease may

be twice as likely to have a heart attack or a stroke. But why? Gum disease is linked to increased inflammation in the entire body, according to the experts. When

combined with factors like high cholesterol and diabetes, gum-related inflammation can contribute to the development of blockages in the arteries. Gum disease also serves as a portal to where bacteria can enter the bloodstream. Research has found the same bacteria from common oral infections in plaques and blockages in the heart arteries. Bacteria from the mouth also may enter and attack artificial heart valves. Brushing

and flossing teeth at least twice a day and visiting the dentist for regular cleanings and check-ups can safeguard teeth and the heart.





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FAQ about diabetes



Diabetes cases have more than quadrupled since 1990, rising from 200 million that year to 830 million by 2022.

Diabetes cases have risen dramatically in recent decades. According to the World Health Organization, the number of people living with diabetes has more than quadrupled since 1990, rising from 200 million that year to 830 million by 2022.

The prevalence of diabetes underscores how significant a threat it poses across the globe. And recognition of that prevalence may prompt questions about the disease, including what can be done to prevent it.

What is diabetes?

The WHO notes diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or the body cannot effectively utilize the insulin that is produced. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that's problematic because insulin acts like a key to let blood sugar into the body's cells for use as energy.

Are there different types of diabetes?

Yes. The CDC notes type 1 diabetes is typically diagnosed in children and young adults, though it's important people recognize it can be diagnosed at any age. Type 1 diabetes is believed to be caused by an autoimmune reaction that stops the body from making insulin. People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin every day to survive.

Type 2 diabetes is characterized by an inability to utilize insulin well and maintain normal blood sugar levels. Though the CDC notes more and more young people are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, the disease is more often diagnosed in adults and tends to develop over many years.

Gestational diabetes is another form of the disease that can develop in pregnant women who have never had diabetes. Gestational diabetes typically goes away after giving birth, but the CDC notes a baby could be at elevated risk for health problems like childhood obesity or type 2 diabetes if a mother develops gestational diabetes during pregnancy.

Are there risk factors for diabetes?

Risk factors vary for each type of diabetes. The risk factors for type 1 diabetes include family history, notably a first degree relative (i.e., parent or sibling) who has the disease, and age since most cases are diagnosed in childhood or adolescence. Age also is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes, as the CDC notes most diagnoses of the disease are made in people age 45 and older. Risk for type 2 diabetes also is greater if a person has a first-degree relative with the condition, but that might be because families tend to live similar lifestyles relating to diet and exercise. A poor diet can increase type 2 diabetes risk, as overweight or obesity are risk factors for the disease. A sedentary lifestyle in which people are physically active less than three times per week also is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes.

What are the signs and symptoms of diabetes?

The WHO reports symptoms of diabetes may occur suddenly but also notes that they can take years to be noticed in people with type 2 diabetes. But some of the more notable symptoms include:

- Feeling very thirsty
- Need for frequent urination
- Blurred vision
- Fatigue
- Unintentional weight loss

The Kovler Diabetes Center at UChicago-Medicine notes that tingling or numbness in the hands or feet, a condition known as neuropathy, also may indicate the presence of diabetes. This occurs over time because high glucose levels can damage the nervous system. Delayed healing of bruises or cuts or frequent infections also can be signs of diabetes.

Diabetes cases are on the rise across the globe, which only underscores the need for everyone to learn more about the disease and what can be done to prevent it.

Signs of spring allergies

Few things are more deflating than finally venturing outdoors after a long winter of cabin fever, only to find that blooming trees and flowers start wreaking havoc with your personal health.

Spring allergies, also known as allergic rhinitis, occur when the body's immune system overreacts to indoor or outdoor allergens, such as tree and grass pollen, mold and dust. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, approximately 25.7 percent of adults and 18.9 percent of children in the United States suffer from seasonal allergies. Allergic rhinitis accounts for an estimated \$16 billion in annual health care costs and is a leading cause of reduced productivity while at work.

Identifying the symptoms of allergies is key to distinguishing them from a cold or another infection and to ensuring fast relief. Spring allergies typically peak from March to May and may even continue into July. Physicians will look for specific physical markers to confirm allergies.

1. Sneezing: Sneezing can occur in rapid-fire patterns, known as paroxysmal sneezing, especially after spending time outdoors. These intense episodes can be tied to allergies or be symptomatic of another condition, says the National Institutes of Health.

2. Itchy, watery eyes: Allergic conjunctivitis is the medical term for this condition, which is a hallmark of spring allergies. Eyes will appear red, feel gritty or drip clear fluid.

3. Nasal congestion/runny nose: A thin, clear discharge typically is a sign of allergies, whereas any mucus that is thick, yellow or green could indicate an infection. Constant upward rubbing of the nose from allergies (called the allergic salute) often causes a permanent transverse nasal crease at the junction of the nose tip and the bridge, says Healthline.

4. Itchy throat and ears: Pollen may cause a scratchy or tingly sensation in the throat and in the ear canals. Medical professionals warn that chronic inflammation from allergies is a primary risk factor for second-



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ary bacterial infections that can occur in the sinuses and ears. Eustachian tube dysfunction occurs when fluid builds up behind the eardrum because the eustachian tubes become blocked or don't open properly to let fluid drain to the nose and throat, says the Cleveland Clinic. Pressure imbalances, muffled hearing, popping sounds, and even pain can occur.

5. "Allergic shiners": Nasal congestion can cause swelling and increased blood vessels to the small veins in the infraorbital area, causing dark, bluish circles under the eyes called periorbital hyperpigmentation, says the Center for Orofacial Myology. This makes allergy sufferers appear as though they have two black eyes.

6. Cough: Post-nasal drip occurs when mucus drips down the back of the throat from the nose. This can cause a persistent, dry cough that's often worse at night. Post-nasal drip also may result in a sore throat and a "cobblestone" appearance in the back of the throat that's visible during a medical exam.

7. Fatigue: Insufficient rest due to allergy-related discomfort can cause those with spring allergies to feel fatigued. The constant immune system response to allergies also can lead to daytime tiredness and lack of focus.

Allergic rhinitis is a problem for millions of people each spring. A combination of avoiding triggers and using allergy medications can help calm any symptoms that crop up.

Tips to lower your cholesterol

Hyperlipidemia, commonly known as high cholesterol, affects many people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 100 million adults in the United States had high total cholesterol levels as recently as 2020. High cholesterol is a significant risk factor for heart disease, which is the leading cause of death worldwide. Although genetics can affect cholesterol levels, lifestyle choices also come into play. Understanding how to manage one's cholesterol is a powerful step toward better health, and there are many ways individuals can do just that.

- Make dietary adjustments. Diet can affect cholesterol levels. However, the Cleveland Clinic says diet only affects about 20 to 30 percent of the cholesterol in a person's blood. The American Heart Association says a diet high in saturated fat can lead to high LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and exacerbate plaque buildup in the walls of the arteries. Saturated fat is found in fatty cuts of meat, butter, cheese, cream, and many baked goods. Choosing leaner options and follow-

ing a Mediterranean diet can help with cholesterol.

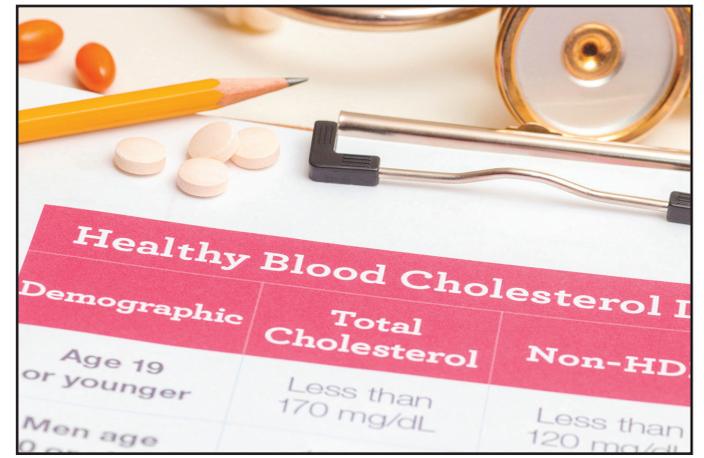
- Exercise regularly. Exercise is a powerful tool for cholesterol management. Exercise can help to lower bad cholesterol and triglyceride levels while increasing HDL (good) cholesterol. The AHA recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity. After a few months of routine exercise, people may see noticeable improvements in their cholesterol levels.

- Losing weight can help. Losing weight can help lower cholesterol levels. Excess body weight, particularly around the waist, can negatively affect how the body processes cholesterol. WebMD says every 10 pounds a person is overweight causes the body to produce as much as 10 milligrams of extra cholesterol every day. Losing even 5 to 10 percent of one's body weight can significantly benefit cardiovascular health.

- Quit smoking and reduce alcohol consumption. Smoking damages blood vessels and accelerates the buildup of plaque.

Excessive alcohol consumption can raise triglyceride levels and affect heart health. Adjusting these habits can benefit the heart in many ways.

- Explore medical intervention. Lifestyle changes alone may not be enough for some individuals to reach target cholesterol numbers, especially if genetic issues or other health conditions are contributing factors. A person's doctor may recommend medication. Statins are the most commonly prescribed and highly effective medications for lowering cholesterol. They work by reducing the liver's production of cholesterol and increasing its ability to remove LDL.



Understanding how to manage one's cholesterol is a powerful step toward better health, and there are many ways individuals can do just that.

Monitoring and addressing high cholesterol is important for overall heart health. Individuals can take a comprehensive approach that includes diet, exercise and potentially medication to keep cholesterol in check.

Multiple health benefits of honey

Some refer to honey as “the nectar of the gods” due to its ties to healing, divinity and culture in ancient times. Honeybees collect nectar from flowers and convert it into honey through an enzymatic process in their specialized bodies. Honey is stored in honeycombs for later consumption. The National Honey Board says a hive can produce about 55 pounds of surplus honey each year that beekeepers harvest from the combs. The extracted honey is strained to remove any particles and excess wax before it is bottled and brought to consumers.

People are drawn to honey, not only for its sweet taste, but because of the health benefits it provides. Here are six unique health benefits of honey.

1. Honey is rich in health-promoting plant compounds known as polyphenols. Healthline says regular consumption of polyphenols is thought to boost digestion and brain health, and protect against certain diseases.

2. Antioxidants found in honey might be associated with a reduced risk of heart dis-

ease.

3. The Mayo Clinic says studies suggest that honey might offer antidepressant, anti-convulsant and anti-anxiety benefits.

4. Both the flavonoids and polyphenols in honey have been shown to be anti-inflammatory, which means they can help tame inflammation in the body that comes from illnesses and eating ultra-processed foods. As a natural sweetener, the Cleveland Clinic says honey is a less inflammatory choice than regular sugar.

5. The World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics both endorse honey as a natural cough remedy. However, honey should not be given to children under the age of one.

6. Manuka honey can be applied topically to treat cuts and sores. This specific type of honey is found to be both antibacterial and antifungal. Raw honey of other types has been used to treat burns and wounds for centuries.

This recipe for “Crunchy Honey-Yogurt

Breakfast Parfait” courtesy of the National Honey Board® seems like a dessert but actually can be enjoyed first thing in the morning. With nutrient-dense ingredients like whole fruits, honey and yogurt, it provides the boost of energy necessary to start one's day.

Crunchy Honey-Yogurt Breakfast Parfait Makes 2 servings

- 1 large banana, sliced, divided
- 1/3 cup honey, divided
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt, divided
- 1/2 cup crunchy granola, divided
- 1/2 cup blueberries, divided

Reserve several slices of banana and a few blueberries for garnish.

Layer 1 tablespoon, 1/4 of the pre-sliced banana, 2 tablespoons blueberries, 2 tablespoons yogurt, 2 tablespoons granola, 1/4 of the sliced banana, 2 tablespoons blueberries, 1 tablespoon honey, and 2 tablespoons granola in a parfait glass.

Repeat for a second parfait.

Garnish with reserved banana, blueberries and a drizzle of honey.



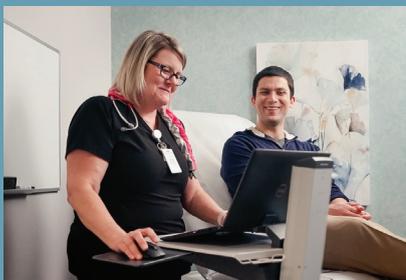


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