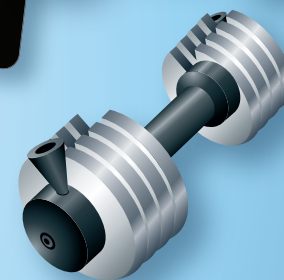


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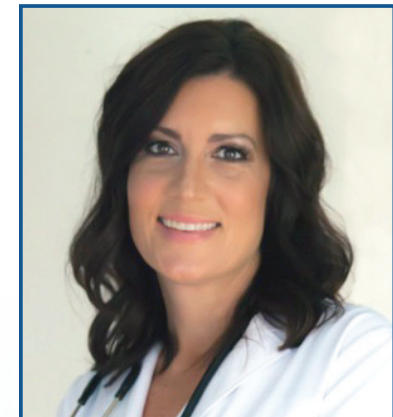
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Three metrics to know if exercise is working

Obstacles are bound to appear as individuals embark on the road to getting healthier. Such obstacles come in many different forms, but one hurdle many individuals encounter is doubts about the effectiveness of their workout regimens.

Everyone would love to reap instant rewards from exercise, and immediate gratification is not necessarily elusive. For example, individuals who begin exercising may find their energy levels and attitudes have improved after their first workout. However, individuals who are exercising to lose weight may be discouraged if the scale doesn't immediately indicate they're shedding unwanted pounds. That's a significant obstacle to overcome, and it's one reason why so many health professionals urge patience and perseverance as individuals embark on their weight loss goals. Though it might not seem like much, industry professionals note that losing one to two pounds per week is a good sign that a workout routine is working.

The experts at Johns Hopkins Medicine

note that weight loss is not the only way for individuals to determine if they're making progress toward their weight loss goals. The following are three additional metrics that individuals can look to as they try to chart their exercise progress.

1. Target heart rate: Before beginning an exercise regimen, individuals, especially those who have been living a sedentary lifestyle, should speak with their physicians to determine what their target heart rate should be. They can then measure their exercise progress by what they need to do to reach that progress. At the outset, individuals may not need to exercise as vigorously to reach their target rates, but as their bodies get healthier and grow more acclimated to exercise, they will need to work harder to reach their target heart rate. This makes target heart rate a good metric by which to measure exercise progress.

2. Repetitions: Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that repetitions are another reliable metric by which to measure exercise progress.

The more repetitions individuals can do without straining, the stronger their muscles are becoming. Individuals should resist any urge to overdo it. The repetitions metric is only a useful measure of progress if individuals are capable of doing a rep without straining.

3. Body composition: This metric should come as no surprise. The more positively exercise affects the body, the more that will show in how the body looks. Johns Hopkins notes that fat loss, specifically around the waist, and muscle growth are two telltale signs that an exercise regimen is progressing.

It can be easy to obsess over results

when beginning an exercise regimen. But remaining patient and persistent and utilizing certain metrics to measure progress can keep individuals on the path to getting fit.



Obstacles come in many different forms, but one hurdle many individuals encounter is doubts about the effectiveness of their workout regimens.



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Common heart conditions explained

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death across the globe. According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 17.9 million people die each year from cardiovascular diseases, which are a group of disorders of the heart and blood vessels.

The sheer volume of deaths caused by heart disease each year suggest there's little people can do to avoid it. However, the Canadian organization Heart & Stroke notes that healthy behaviors like eating a heart-healthy diet and exercising regularly can help individuals delay the onset of heart disease by as much as 14 years.

Education is another valuable asset in the fight against heart disease. Individuals who are aware of common heart illnesses can discuss them with their physicians and take measures to reduce their risk.

1. Angina: Heart & Stroke notes that angina is another word for chest pain. The discomfort associated with angina, which can feel like squeezing, suffocating or burning, is caused by a temporary disruption in the flow of blood and oxygen to the heart.

Though angina symptoms typically do not last long, they are considered warning signs for heart attack and should be discussed with a physician immediately after they appear.

2. Atherosclerosis: Atherosclerosis is characterized by the buildup of plaque on the interior wall of an artery. That buildup makes the walls of the artery thick and hard, thus restricting the flow of blood, and can potentially contribute to a blockage. The experts at Johns Hopkins Medicine note that risk factors for atherosclerosis include high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, and a poor diet that includes lots of saturated fats. Atherosclerosis can cause angina, though many individuals with the condition experience no symptoms until it has reached

an advanced stage. Blockages in the leg may cause cramping when exercising or walking, while those in the arteries of the heart can cause heart attack. Blockages that develop in the brain can cause stroke.

3. Cardiomyopathy: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that cardiomyopathy often goes undiagnosed, making it hard to determine just how common the condition is. But the CDC estimates that as

many as one in 500 adults have cardiomyopathy. Cardiomyopathy is a disease of the heart muscle that makes it harder for the heart to pump oxygen-rich blood to the body at optimal capacity. Heart & Stroke notes that cardio-

myopathy can lead to heart failure. Early stages of cardiomyopathy may not produce

any symptoms, but as the disease gets worse individuals may experience fainting, irregular or rapid heartbeats, light-headedness, and swelling of the hands and feet, among other things.

4. Coronary artery disease: Heart & Stroke notes that coronary artery disease (CAD) is the most common form of heart disease. CAD occurs when one or more of the coronary arteries narrows or becomes blocked. CAD causes damage or disease to major blood vessels that supply blood, oxygen and nutrients to the heart. Certain risk factors for CAD, such as age, are beyond individuals' control. However, many risk factors are within a person's control. Individuals can speak to their physicians about how to maintain a healthy blood pressure and a healthy weight, limit stress, and reduce their cholesterol, all of which can lower risk for CAD.

Heart disease claims the lives of millions of people each year. Recognizing common heart conditions and how to prevent them can help individuals lower their risk for this deadly, yet often preventable disease.



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Minutes Matter: Don't put heart health on hold during COVID

By Betsy Hunt, CNO, Maria Parham Health

When a heart attack strikes, every minute matters. The first few minutes are critical in determining the short-term and long-term outcome for the patient. While the world continues to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic, heart disease is still the leading cause of death in the US – and as such – it's important to seek care in an emergency.

Heart attacks, stroke and cardiac arrest are all life-threatening, and every second is critical. If you or someone around you is experiencing any of the following symptoms identified by the American Heart Association, call 9-1-1 immediately to receive help and treatment as quickly as possible.

Symptoms of a heart attack:

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.



Symptoms of a stroke:

- Face drooping. If you notice one side of your or someone else's face drooping, or if it is numb, this is a telltale sign of a stroke. If you are uncertain, ask the person to smile. If their smile droops on one side, they are likely having a stroke and it's time to call 9-1-1.
- Arm weakness. Many stroke victims experience weakness or numbness in one arm.
- Speech difficulty. Speech may be slurred, prohibited or difficult to understand. If someone you are with is experiencing this, ask him or her to repeat a simple sentence, like "the sky is blue." If he or she cannot, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Symptoms of cardiac arrest:

- Sudden loss of responsiveness. The person does not respond when tapped on the shoulder.
 - No normal breathing. The victim does not take a normal breath when you tilt the head up and check for at least five seconds.
- If you have heart disease or condition or have survived a stroke, you may be considered higher risk for COVID-19 complications, but don't delay routine care.

Know the signs and symptoms of a heart-related emergency and call 9-1-1. Acting quickly may save a life, including your own. To learn more, visit heart.org or MariaParham.com.

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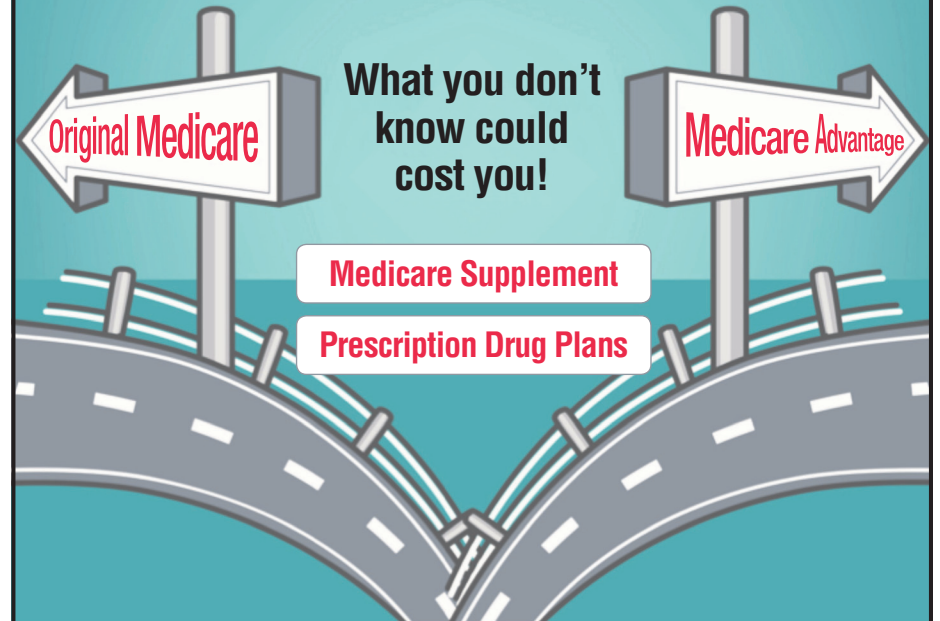


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Seven strategies to prevent cancer

Cancer affects people from all walks of life. The National Cancer Institute estimated that, in 2020, roughly 1.9 million new cases of cancer would be diagnosed and more than 606,000 people would die from the disease.

The most common cancers include breast, lung, prostate, colon, melanoma, and bladder cancers. Even the healthiest people are not immune to these diseases. However, there are ways for people to reduce their risk for various cancers.

1. Skip tobacco products. Avoiding tobacco in all forms can greatly reduce a person's risk of developing cancer. Smoking is a major contributor to various cancers, including lung and bladder cancers.

2. Exercise regularly. Exercise benefits the body in various ways, including reducing a person's risk for various types of cancers. The American Institute for Cancer Research recommends exercising for at least 45 minutes per day. This doesn't have to mean a hard workout at the gym. Moderate exercise through gardening, dancing, playing with children, or walking the dog are sufficient forms of exercise.

3. Lose weight in a healthy way. The American Cancer Society says obesity and being overweight have been linked to increased risk for breast, colon, esophageal, endometrial, and pancreatic cancers. Fat and sugar metabolism may be mechanisms implicating weight in cancer occurrence. Skip the fad diets and lose weight through portion control, a balance of healthy foods and exercise.

4. Limit alcohol consumption. Excessive alcohol consumption increases the risk of cancers to the breast, esophagus, mouth, and larynx. Harvard Medical School recommends that those who choose to drink limit alcohol their consumption to no more than one drink per day.

5. Reduce consumption of animal fats. Verywell Health notes that studies point to a diet high in animal fat as a contributor to increased risk of certain cancers. Red meat is a particular concern.

6. Avoid radiation exposure. Opt for medical imaging tests only when they are absolutely necessary. Radon in a home is a factor in cancer causation, so homeowners should periodically test their homes for radon. In addition, sunscreen and avoiding the sun during certain times of day, such as between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., can reduce exposure to potentially harmful UV rays.

7. Prioritize safe behaviors. Certain viruses can cause cancer, including Epstein-Barr and human papillomavirus. Hepatitis and HIV also can increase a person's risk for cancer. Practicing safe sex and avoiding illegal drug use can lower the risk of getting cancer from infectious diseases.

Cancer continues to be a leading cause of death and affects millions of people. By examining their behaviors and lifestyles, people can make changes that reduce their risk for various cancers.



Healthy foods that are rich in vegetables and low in animal fats can help people reduce their cancer risk.

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Ten most common causes of cancer

Cancer is a leading cause of illness and death around the world. However, according to Otis Brawley, M.D., the former Chief Medical Officer at the American Cancer Society, two-thirds of cancer cases in the United States are linked to preventable causes. Here's a look at the leading causes of cancer, some of which are avoidable.

1. Tobacco use
2. Obesity or overweight

3. Lack of physical exercise
4. Poor diet
5. Exposure to UV radiation and other radiation
6. Overindulgence in alcohol
7. Air pollution
8. Age
9. Exposure to viruses like the human papillomavirus (HPV)
10. Inherited genes



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Dry eye help

Chronic dry eye affects an estimated 20.7 million people in the United States, occurring when the correct quantity or quality of tears are not produced. Dry eye can be a progressive disease and if left untreated, can lead to more serious problems, including impaired vision and an increased risk of eye infection.

How do you know if you have dry eye? Symptoms vary from person to person and often fluctuate throughout the day. Symptoms may include itching, irritation, a gritty sensation, sensitivity to light, and fluctuating vision. Contrary to what you might think, dryness often causes your eyes to become watery.

Dry eye has many potential causes, including hormonal changes, age, medications, environmental factors, medical conditions, contact lens wear and computer use.

Your eye doctor can check for the signs of dry eye using several quick and painless tests. A special colored eye drop is used



to highlight problems on the ocular surface. The production, evaporation rate and quality of the tear film will also be assessed. Newer technologies can image the oil producing glands and evaluate your blinking patterns.

Treatment of dry eye is based on the disease severity and the cause of the dryness. For some people, simply changing their environment or medications can improve symptoms. People who use over-the-counter lubricating drops daily or who have persistent symptoms should see their eye doctor to determine what additional treatments are needed. Some people may benefit from prescription eye drops. Prescription eye drops can help to reduce inflammation and increase the eyes' natural ability to produce tears. Punctal plugs can be inserted into the small holes in the eyelids where the tears drain out. This painless, reversible procedure is quickly done in the office and is a great alternative for people who dislike or are unable to use eye drops. Punctal plugs help to keep the tears on the surface of the eyes for a longer period of time. LipiFlow and Intense Pulsed Light therapy are in-office procedures that dramatically improve the function of the oil producing glands in the eyelids, bringing significant relief to those who have been suffering from dry eye symptoms.

You do not have to merely accept dry eye symptoms as a normal part of aging or contact lens wear. While there is no cure for dry eye, many options are available to improve the comfort of your eyes. In general, early treatment for a chronic disease like dry eye is more likely to achieve a better outcome. Discuss your symptoms and concerns with your eye doctor, who will be your best resource for determining the necessary steps toward a healthier ocular surface.

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Ways to make your diet more nutritious

Healthy eating should be a goal all year long. Choosing nutrient-rich foods at the grocery store is a great way to accomplish that goal.

The American Heart Association says research suggests the standard American diet is energy-rich (calorically heavy) but nutrient poor. And according to Canada-based registered dietician Nicole Osinga, though Canadians are making smarter food choices, room for improvement remains, especially in regard to limiting consumption of red meat.

Nutrient-rich foods are those that are high in minerals, vitamins and other nutrients that are vital for health without too much added sugars, sodium and saturated fat. Such foods include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein sources that can serve as the building blocks of a nutritious diet. These tips can make incorporating nutritious ingredients even easier.

1. Read nutrition labels

The Nutrition Facts label included on items sold in North America is a significant source of information. Consumers may only read the first few lines, but it's best to read the entire label before deciding whether or not to purchase a given product.

Some foods may feature endorsements on their packaging



and the inclusion of such labels indicates they're healthy choices. For example, the American Heart Association's Heart-Check mark indicates the product aligns with their recommendations for an overall healthy eating plan.

2. Choose more whole grains

Whole grains are low in fat and high in fiber. They're also a smarter source of carbohydrates because they contain com-

plex carbs that keep a person feeling fuller longer. Try to avoid products labeled as "enriched," as they've had the germ and bran removed from the grain to produce a smoother texture, which means they need to be refortified with nutrients.

3. Eat dark, leafy greens

Green vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, and plant-based omega-3 fatty acids. Kale, spinach and collard greens can be added to soups, stews, scrambled eggs, and salads for a powerful punch of nutrition.

4. Pick pulses

Pulses are essential to plant-based diets, but they also can be enjoyed by meat eaters. The Global Pulse Federation says pulses, which include foods like lentils and chickpeas, are rich in protein and fiber and low in fat. They also contain complex carbohydrates that take longer to break down. Research shows pulses can lower blood cholesterol, reduce blood pressure and help with weight management.

5. Go with skim or low-fat dairy

Dairy products are rich in calcium and vitamin D, but those nutrients may come at the cost of saturated fat. Choose reduced fat dairy options in recipes and when snacking.



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What sufficient sleep does for the human body

Sleep is an often unsung hero of overall health. Diet and exercise get their fair share of glory, but without a good night's rest, even the most physically active, nutrition-conscious individuals are vulnerable to a host of ailments and illnesses.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, most adults need seven or more hours of sleep on a regular schedule each night. Athletes may even benefit from additional sleep. In fact, a 2011 study published in the journal *Sleep* examined the effects of sleep extension on the athletic performance of collegiate basketball players. That study found that athletes asked to extend their normal sleep times exhibited faster sprint times and increased free-throw accuracy and a reduction in fatigue at the end of the sleep extension period.

Improved athletic performance is not the only way that sufficient sleep benefits the human body.

Sufficient sleep and the immune system

The Mayo Clinic notes that the immune system releases proteins called cytokines during sleep. The release of certain cytokines needs to increase when individuals are experiencing infections or inflammation, which is one reason why doctors often recommend

extra sleep to sick patients. Without adequate sleep, the immune system may not produce enough cytokines, and that can increase the frequency with which individuals get sick.

Sufficient sleep and weight gain

The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health reports there is mounting evidence to suggest a link between insufficient sleep and weight gain and obesity. Studies exploring this potential link have been conducted for decades and have examined how sleep affects people of all ages and genders. At the 2006 American Thoracic Society International Conference, researchers who had tracked women's sleep habits for 16 years found that those who slept just six hours per night were 12 percent more likely to experience major weight gain than women who slept seven hours per night. Experts aren't entirely sure why this relationship exists, but the results of various studies support the idea that insufficient sleep is a potential catalyst for gaining weight.

Sufficient sleep and chronic disease

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that insufficient sleep has been linked to the development and management of various chronic diseases. For example, the CDC indicates

that insufficient sleep has been linked to an increased risk for type 2 diabetes. In addition, the CDC reports that instances of hypertension, stroke, coronary heart disease, and irregular heartbeat are more common among individuals with disordered sleep than they are among people without such sleep abnormalities.

Sleep is not often mentioned alongside diet and exercise as a vital component of overall health. But a

good night's rest is no less vital to long-term health than a healthy diet and physical activity.



A good night's sleep is essential to your well-being

Why breakfast still matters

Many adults recall being told "breakfast is the most important meal of the day" when they were youngsters. Though the accuracy of that phrasing hinges on what people eat during their morning meal, scientific evidence supports the notion that breakfast is important to overall health. A 2017 study published in the *Journal of Physiology* found that eating breakfast decreased the activity of genes involved in insulin resistance and increased the amount of sugar taken up by the cells. Those two results suggest that eating breakfast could help protect against chronic illnesses, including type 2 diabetes. As important as breakfast can be,

more important is what individuals eat for breakfast. Various cereals contain a significant amount of added sugars, which the Mayo Clinic notes have been linked to a host of adverse health effects, including weight gain, increased triglyceride levels and tooth decay. In 2019, registered dietitian nutritionist Sharon Collison told *Time* magazine that a morning meal that contains protein, whole grains, healthy fat, and a fruit or vegetable can increase satiety and reduce risk for snacking later in the day. In addition, such a breakfast should provide significant amounts of fiber, vitamins and minerals that can benefit both short- and long-term health.



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Long-term solutions to protect joints

Periodic aches and pains can affect anyone. Individuals who are physically active and even those who live largely sedentary lifestyles may experience pain from time to time. In fact, many professional and amateur athletes experience relatively minor, short-term injuries at one point or another, and rest is often the best remedy to overcome such obstacles.

Though minor tweaks may be somewhat normal, long-term issues like persistent joint pain should not be written off as par for the course. It can be tempting to write joint pain off as a concern only serious athletes need to worry about. Terms like “tennis elbow” and “runner’s knee” can give less physically active individuals a false impression of joint pain and what causes it. But the Mayo Clinic notes that lack of exercise can contribute to pain and stiffness in the joints. That’s because exercise strengthens the muscles and tissues that surround the

joints. That added strength puts less stress on the joints.

In recognition of the threat posed by chronic joint pain, the Arthritis Foundation® recommends individuals take various steps to protect their joints over the long haul.

- Focus less on fashion in regard to footwear. High heels may be the epitome of glamorous footwear, but women who routinely wear high heels will pay a steep price. The AF notes that heels put added stress on the knees and increase risk for osteoporosis, and experts indicate that three-inch heels are seven times more stressful on feet than one-inch heels. But women aren’t the only ones whose footwear fashion sense could be hurting their joints. Men also must pay attention to what they’re putting on their feet. For example, sandals without a back strap force toes to overgrip the edge of the sandal, putting needless strain on each foot and potentially causing issues



The Arthritis Foundation® recommends individuals take various steps to protect their joints over the long haul.

with the toes.

- Alternate between sitting and standing throughout the day. Joint stiffness and strain can develop when individuals spend lengthy periods of time sitting or standing. The AF recommends taking a break to stand up or sit down every 30

minutes. Professionals who sit at a desk all day may want to switch to height-adjustable desks that make it easy for them to transition from sitting to standing and still get their work done.

- Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight causes a ripple

effect that impacts the entire body, including the joints. The AF notes that researchers have determined that losing 11 pounds can reduce risk for osteoarthritis of the knee by 50 percent. On the flip side, each extra pound an individual carries puts four times the stress on his or her knees. Exercising to lose weight can provide the added benefit of preventing joint stiffness.

- Opt for low-impact activities. Low-impact activities like cycling and swimming are easier on the joints than fitness classes that involve high-intensity dancing and kickboxing. In addition, when choosing between a treadmill and elliptical machine, the Mayo Clinic notes that ellipticals are generally considered low-impact machines that are less stressful on the knees, hips and back than running on a treadmill or even outdoors.

Various strategies can help individuals maintain healthy, pain-free joints over the long haul.

Pros and cons of sodium consumption

The typical Canadian or American diet tends to be high in sodium, with many processed foods containing high amounts of salt for flavoring and preservation. Even though sodium has a bad reputation, salt in certain amounts is necessary for the body to function properly. Here’s a deeper look at how sodium can be beneficial and how it can be harmful.

PROS

Sodium is one of the body’s three major electrolytes, with potassium and chloride being the others. Salt helps regulate blood pressure and blood volume, transmit impulses for nerve function and muscle contraction, and helps regulate the acid-base balance of blood and bodily fluids. According to SFGate’s Healthy Eating, salt can help with healthy muscle contractions and promotes muscle function during physical activity.

The Rush University Medical Center explains that sodium also regulates body

heat. The hypothalamus, the body’s “thermostat,” signals the middle layer of the skin to bring salt and water to the skin’s surface when a person is overheating (sweating) to help cool the body.

CONS

One of the reasons why sodium is vilified is that too much can lead to hypertension, better known as high blood pressure. According to research by the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension program, directed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, there is a direct correlation between the amount of salt consumed and blood pressure levels. Exceeding the 2,400 mg daily limit can push blood pressure into dangerous territory. Some doctors suggest ideal sodium intake should not exceed 1,500 mg daily.

Too much sodium also can contribute to fluid retention in the body, leading to swelling of the legs and feet, a problem for indi-

viduals who are not physically active.

The kidneys are the filters of the body, and people with kidney disease could be especially vulnerable to adverse health consequences if they consume too much salt. In such situations, the kidneys may not be able to eliminate the excess sodium in the body, potentially leading to hypertension or heart

issues, according to Davita Kidney Care. Also, too much salt may contribute to the formation of kidney stones.

Sodium is necessary for life, but overconsumption may lead to health issues that are entirely preventable. People should monitor just how much salt they consume to ensure they stay within healthy ranges.

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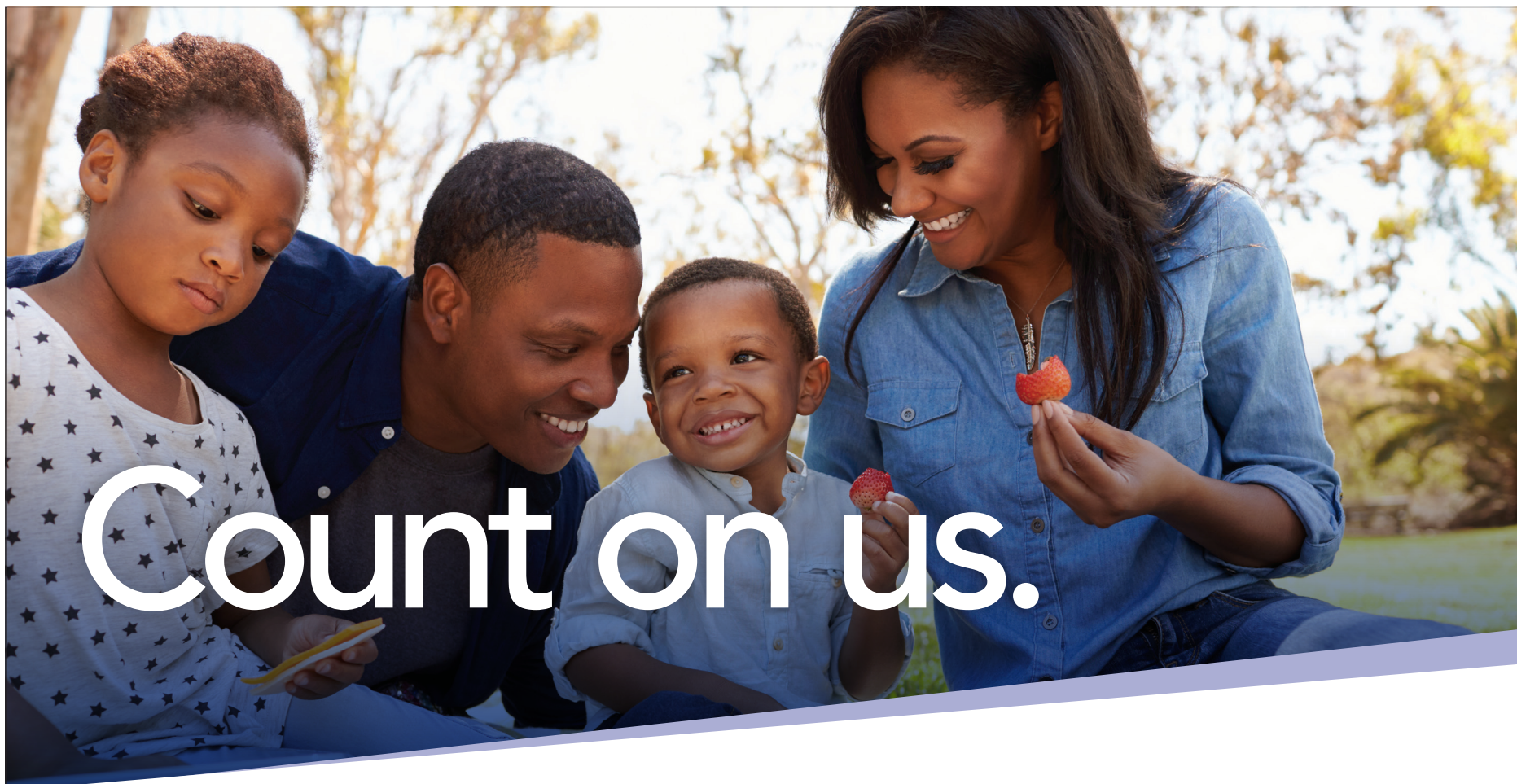
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