

MANAGED CARE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS NEWSLETTER



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June is Home Safety Month



Home Safety Month

Ask Americans where they feel safest and most will say their own home. However, unintentional injuries in the home result in nearly 21 million medical visits on average each year.*

The Home Safety Council dedicates the month of June – Home Safety Month – to educate and empower both families and businesses to take actions that will make homes safe. “We hope to bring attention to the serious problem of preventable home injuries and its leading causes: slips and falls, poisonings and fires and burns,” says Meri-K Appy, president of the Home Safety Council. “Just a few simple steps can dramatically reduce the dangers in most homes and may even make a lifesaving difference.” Throughout Home Safety Month, the Home Safety Council encourages the public to consider their home’s danger areas and take some simple steps to minimize their risk from potential injuries, or even death.

Prevent Falls

- Have bright lights over stairs and steps and on landings.
- Have handrails on both sides of the stairs and steps.

Prevent Poisonings

- Lock poisons, cleaners, medications and all dangerous items in a place where children can’t reach them.
- Keep all cleaners in their original containers. Do not mix them together.

Prevent Fires & Burns

- Have working smoke alarms and hold fire drills. If you build a new home, install fire sprinklers.
- Stay by the stove when cooking, especially when you are frying food.

Prevent Choking and Suffocation

- Place children to bed on their backs. Don’t put pillows, comforters or toys in the crib.
- Clip the loops in window cords and place them up high where children can’t get them.

- Content from Homesafetycouncil.org

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Men’s Corner: Gallstones linked to “Gut” Circumference



Anyone who has experienced gallstones is familiar with the accompanying pain and discomfort. Gallstones are crystallized clumps of cholesterol that form in the gallbladder. After eating, one usually experiences symptoms such as indigestion, bloating and abdominal pain. A recent study found out that adult men:

- with a 37-38 inch waist circumference had a 40% higher risk of getting gallstones
- with a 39 inch waist circumference, had an 80% higher chance of getting gallstones and
- with a waist circumference was 40 inches or more **doubled** their risk of getting gallstones.

The abdominal fat in the waist area is thought to be more metabolically active than fat distributed in the lower body areas. It releases greater amounts of substances like fatty acids and hormones.

Action Sparked

Men, take out the tape measure and do a quick circumference measurement of your waist. Shedding a few pounds and dropping a few inches can do wonders for your health, including your gallbladder.

-content from SparkPeople.com

Secret Ingredient Water: The Wild Card of Weight Loss



Is water important? Well let's see, other than making up 50%-60% of our bodies, regulating body temperature, helping our breathing, transporting nutrients, carrying away waste and helping our muscles function, water is pretty much useless. Oh, and you need water or, after three days without it, you'll die.

So in other words, water is pretty darn essential. It can even be an extremely important (and often unappreciated) weight loss factor.

Somehow, though, water is one of the most neglected parts of our diet. Some of us possibly go an entire day at times without one glass! Every part of your body is dependent on and comprised of water, and the most important parts need even more. Your brain is made up of 75% water, your blood 82% and your lungs nearly 90%.

Besides being a vital component of your body, water also helps to reduce weight. The more hydrated you are, the quicker your metabolism works. When you are dehydrated – even before you start becoming thirsty – your liver has to help the kidneys function and can't metabolize fat as quickly. Your metabolism slows down, causing some unwanted fat to remain.

If your body is used to not getting water, it actually stores more in ankles, hips and thighs. In other words, it doesn't trust you to keep bringing water, so it keeps what it can get, like a thirsty cactus. Once it realizes the water will keep coming, your body will get rid of the stores and you'll lose weight. Plus, if you're suffering from cravings or having trouble controlling hunger, drinking water is a quick, healthy way to feel full. Drink a glass when you normally snack, and have one before your meal and right before going out.

Staying hydrated is not restricted to drinking water; milk, juice and other liquids – even some fruits and vegetables – are good sources of water. But avoid caffeinated beverages (coffee, soda), as they actually cause you to lose fluids and become dehydrated.

The recommended daily amount of water is eight cups a day, but don't feel bad if you have neglected your water intake. Even if you constantly drink coffee or soda, you can make some simple changes to increase the water in your diet. Here are just a few ways to get more water every day:

- Find the water bottles with pop tops. They're easier to carry around and use than twist off caps.
- Keep a water bottle in the car.
- Take a water break instead of a smoke break at work.
- Set a rule with your water glass: once it's empty, it gets filled back up right away.
- Drink orange juice or eat fruit in the morning.
- Order water at restaurants instead of soda. Even if you have something else to drink, have water too.

-Sparkpeople.com

Wisdom is knowing what to do next, skill is knowing how to do it, and virtue is doing it.

-Anonymous

Why High SPF Doesn't Always Mean Better Protection

Know how strong your sunscreen *really* is to help ward off skin cancer



Don't let those high-SPF sunscreens lull you into a false sense of security when it comes to skin cancer. Experts say people overestimate just how much protection these products can provide.

Skin cancer rates have continued to creep upward, at about 3% a year since the early 1980s, according to the U.S. CDC. That includes the deadly melanoma, which is estimated to kill nearly 8,000 people in the United States annually.

Part of the problem is that many believe that the higher the SPF, the longer you can stay in the sun.

The Sun Protection Factor (SPF) is a laboratory measure scientists developed to measure the time it takes skin to burn under UV exposure, but it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. If you know how long it takes you to start burning without protection in the midday sun--say 10 minutes--multiply that by the SPF number. For someone who burns in 10 minutes without protection, a sunscreen with an SPF 30 would deliver 300 minutes of protection against burning, or five hours.

That's the theory, but the SPF physically wears off with rubbing, sweating and water. The protection you get is more likely one hour to 80 minutes," says Dr. Henry Lim, chairman of the Department of Dermatology at Henry Ford Hospital, in Detroit.

The best idea is to aim for SPF 15 or higher, since the higher SPF does offer stronger sun protection, although not necessarily much longer sun protection. An SPF 15 blocks 94% of UVB rays, while SPF 30 blocks 97% of UVB rays.

Manufacturers are trying to deliver more foolproof sun protection. Scientists have also been looking at dietary nutrients to boost skin's defenses against UV damage, and some sunscreen products contain antioxidant vitamins C and E already. "There's some scientific evidence of photo-protection, but they don't replace other sunscreen agents, they're adjunctive agents that help," Lim said.

The ultimate hope is for a sunscreen pill, which you could pop before heading to the beach, with no mess or reapplication required. Already available is Heliocare, a nutritional pill supplement made with a fern extract that offers three hours of UV protection, but it's not meant as stand-alone sunscreen product.

- *Prevention Magazine*

Buzz Off, West Nile!

Play outdoors – bug-free



No matter where you live, West Nile virus (WNV) could be buzzing close by. Cases have increased ever year since the first North American outbreak in 1999. This potentially deadly virus, transmitted by pesky mosquitoes, could become even more widespread in the coming years.

Hide indoors? No way! Here's how leading WNV experts suggest you reduce your risk *without* missing out on summer fun.

Cover Up and Slather On Keep long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and insect repellents containing N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide (DEET) handy in a tote bag. If you'll be out where mosquitoes are biting, throw on the clothes, and apply repellent to exposed skin. Repellents containing DEET offer the longest-lasting protection. Adults should use products with 10 to 50 percent DEET, but for kids over age 2, stick with 10 percent or lower.

Be Cautious from Dawn to Dusk The primary mosquito species thought to be responsible for WNV's spread feeds at night, but a few daytime species can transmit the virus too.

Be Extra-vigilant in Dry Spells Hot, dry weather may increase virus levels in infected mosquitoes--and drive away the birds these skeeters would rather feed upon. That makes you more inviting.

Know WNV's Symptoms Check with a doctor anytime you're feeling ill with a fever and severe headaches. (Intestinal symptoms can be a warning sign too.)

-*Prevention Magazine*

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Super Food of the Month:



Strawberries:

The fragrantly sweet juiciness and deep red color of strawberries can brighten up both the taste and aesthetics of any meal; it is no wonder they are the most popular berry fruit in the world. Although strawberries have become increasingly available year-round, they are at the peak of their season from April through July when they are the most delicious and most abundant.

The strawberry not only provides a flush red color, they also serve as potent antioxidants that have repeatedly been shown to help protect cell structures in the body and to prevent oxygen damage in all of the body's organ systems. Strawberries are a heart-protective fruit, an anti-cancer fruit, and an anti-inflammatory fruit, all rolled into one.

As strawberries are very perishable, they should only be purchased a few days prior to use. Choose berries that are firm, plump, free of mold, and which have a shiny, deep red color and attached green caps. Since strawberries, once picked, do not ripen further, avoid those that are dull in color or have green or yellow patches since they are likely to be sour and of inferior quality.

Recipe of the Month:



Strawberry Cloud

Ingredients:

- 2/3 cup frozen strawberries (plain -- NOT in syrup!)
- 5 oz. light vanilla soymilk
- 2 tsp. Fat Free French Vanilla Coffee-mate powder (dissolved in an oz. of warm water)
- 1 oz. Torani Sugar Free Strawberry Syrup
- 3 no-calorie sweetener packets (like Splenda)
- 3 large ice cubes
- 2 tbsp. Fat Free Reddi-whip

Directions:

Place all of the ingredients in a blender, except for the Reddi-whip. Blend on high speed for 30 - 45 seconds. Pour, and top with the Reddi-whip

PER SERVING (entire recipe): 119 calories, 1g fat, 102mg sodium, 21g carbs, 2g fiber, 14g sugars, 4g protein -- POINTS® value 2*

-HungryGirl.com

Wii Fit Rides the Virtual Exercise Wave



The U.S. debut of Nintendo's Wii Fit system suggests that the trend of breaking a sweat and raising your heart rate while twirling a virtual hula hoop or fighting off avatars is most definitely here to stay.

The Wii Fit system offers 40 games in four categories -- yoga, aerobics, balance, and strength training. Wii Fit games include hula hooping, snowboarding, step aerobics, and yoga.

Wii Fit's Role as 'Personal Trainer'

Wii Fit and other virtual exercise platforms basically meet gamers where they live -- the couch. With Wii Fit, participants stand on the balance board in front of the television and move and groove along with the instructions and graphics. Instead of the traditional joysticks, the body serves as the conduit.

The Wii Fit system also serves as a personal trainer of sorts by providing feedback and tracking progress. A player's "Mii character" actually reflects these changes; if you slim down, so does your virtual counterpart. Every person in a household gets his or her own character and can chart progress separately. As you become better, it unlocks newer games and increases the intensity so you do more repetitions as you progress.

This is just the "tip of the iceberg" when it comes to virtual exercise. It doesn't replace going to the gym or playing on a softball team. It's yet another tool in the toolbox of active living. With the growing epidemic of childhood obesity in the U.S., there is no doubt that the new system can help children shed excess weight and become more active. But it's not just for kids.

The American Council on Exercise (ACE) conducted a study of Dance, Dance Revolution on 24 people aged 12 to 25. All participants showed a marked increase in exercise intensity and burned a similar number of calories as they would if they were participating in other forms of aerobic activity.

Games like Dance, Dance Revolution and Wii Fit System put the fun back in exercise, and that is what has been missing. So many people became disengaged because exercise seems to be work and not a pleasant experience. [Virtual exercise] has touched on a cord that is important in fitness and that is to make things fun. One potential downside is that these games are really just Band-aids.

Wii Fit and the balance board retails for \$89.99.

-WebMd.com

Upcoming Managed Care Wellness Events:

Wednesday, June 4th, 2008: Wellness Lunch and Learn: Personal Wellness Plan (Executive Conference Room)

Thursday June 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th: Managed Care Lunchtime Yoga

Wednesday, June 11th, 2008: Wellness Grand Rounds (Executive Conference Room)