

TOPHEALTH®

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

Working Well EAP

Provider of Employee Assistance and Wellness Services

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A Year of Healthy Eating

Trying to lose weight? Remember that crash diets often fail because they require too much change too soon. The secret to success is to make small changes over time.

January: Cut back on saturated fats and cholesterol. **Tips:** Go meatless one night a week ... switch from whole milk to 1 percent ... replace butter with olive oil or trans-fat-free vegetable spreads.

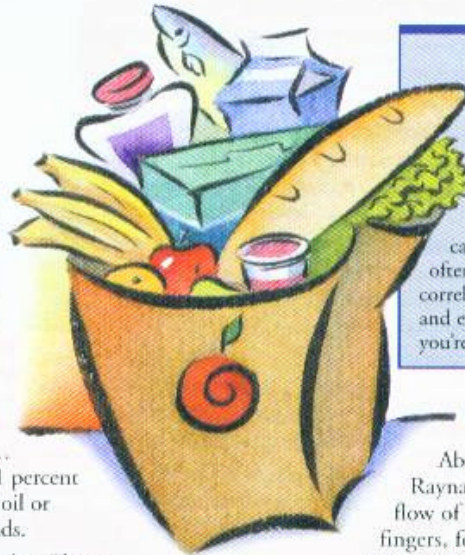
February: Up your fiber intake. Choose whole-wheat bread for sandwiches; sprinkle wheat germ or ground flax seed on cereal; eat potatoes and apples with their skins.

March: Start choosing healthful snacks and eat smaller, more frequent meals to ease hunger pangs.

April: Trim trans fat. Fill your grocery cart with plant-based foods to replace processed foods, which often contain this artery-clogging fat.

May: Eat more vegetables. Make them the main dish at meals by reducing portions of meats and other main dishes.

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DR. ZORBA'S LONGEVITY CORNER

SKIN SENSE FOR ALL SEASONS A recent study in the United Kingdom showed that skin cancer is on the rise in Scotland. That might not strike a chord with you, but Scotland is overcast and rarely sunny during the summer. The explanation? Many Scots travel to the Mediterranean during the winter and catch some rays — too many, it turns out, and they often sunburn. It's the number of severe sunburns that correlate with this increase in cancer. So this winter — and every season — use sunscreen. It protects whenever you're in the sun.

Cold Feet, Cold Hands?

About 5 to 10 percent of Americans are affected by Raynaud's phenomenon, a condition that reduces the flow of warmth-giving blood to the extremities. Hands, fingers, feet and toes can become numb and turn white and blue, especially when exposed to cold temperatures.

Warm up. If you suffer from extremely cold hands and feet, try these measures:

Shake it up. Try whipping your arms around like a windmill, shaking your hands or opening and closing your fists. These exercises may help drive blood back through the arteries to increase circulation.

Chill out. Stress can trigger Raynaud's. If this happens, remove yourself from the stressful situation and try to calm down by breathing deeply.

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6 Steps to Get Moving Again

A new year: the perfect time to restart your exercise routine. Easier said than done? Not if you have a plan:

1. Choose something fun. You won't stick with activities you don't enjoy. Choose those that feel comfortable and that you can look forward to. **Tip:** Swimming, cross-country skiing, in-line skating, cycling and rowing are easier on the joints.

2. Easy does it. Keep your first sessions light and fun, not tiring. Your goal is to create a habit, so don't exercise to the point of exhaustion. You'll avoid procrastination — and injury.

3. Stick to a schedule. Start with moderate activity, such as a brisk walk, for at least 30 minutes every other day. Choose the most convenient and enjoyable time of day.

Tip: You might find exercise uncomfortable right after eating or when weather is extreme.

4. Raise the bar. Gradually increase time, distance, weight or repetitions to build strength and endurance. Never work to the point of pain or swelling.

5. Manage sore muscles. A little stiffness is normal, but don't exercise if you feel pain. The soreness should disappear as you exercise regularly. If it persists, consult your health care provider.

6. Reward yourself. Celebrate milestones — total miles walked or run, pounds lost, weight lifted. You'll find yourself reaching higher, longer and harder. Best of all, the positive reinforcement will help you stick with the program.



Eating ... *(continued)*

June: Eat more fruit. Sprinkle blueberries on morning cereal; bring sliced cantaloupe for lunch; try strawberries over frozen yogurt for dessert.

July: Cut empty calories from sweet drinks — quench your thirst with 100 percent juices and water instead of soda.

August: Use grilling season to start cooking more. It's the best way to control portions and ingredients.

September: Become a brown-bagger. Bring your lunch most days of the week rather than eating out.

October: Cut back on sweets. Reach for fresh or dried fruit instead.

November: Eat smaller portions. At holiday feasts, enjoy a little of everything. Chew slowly and savor the tastes to avoid overeating.

December: Move closer to a plant-based diet. Eat whole-grain cereal for breakfast ... bring sliced vegetables to work for snacks ... add another meatless dinner to the weekly menu.

Give your body and mind time to adjust by changing eating habits gradually, and in no time you'll be eating healthier — for life.

Cold? ... *(continued)*

Just add water. Run your hands or toes under lukewarm water, or soak them in a basin of warm (not hot) water.

Wrap it in warmth. Apply a heating pad on a medium-warm setting to hands or feet for about 15 minutes.

IF NOTHING SPELLS

RELIEF: Check with your health care provider. There are medicines available to help alleviate severe symptoms.

Stalking a Silent Vision Thief

Glaucoma is an eye disease in which pressure builds inside the eye, damaging the optic nerve. It's often called the silent thief, because it slowly steals your vision, often without any symptoms at first.

Left untreated, glaucoma can lead to blindness. In fact, it's the second leading cause of vision loss in the United States. **Here's how to keep an eye out for trouble:**

WATCH your pressure. Keep your blood pressure under control. Recent research suggests that people with high blood pressure are much more likely to develop glaucoma.

LOOK at other health factors. People with diabetes or heart disease are at increased risk for glaucoma, as are those who are nearsighted or who have other eye problems.

SEE your specialist. There's no cure for glaucoma, but research shows that early detection and treatment can help delay its progression and vision loss. See an eye care professional for regular glaucoma screening, especially if you are African-American and over 40; over 60; or have a family history of the disease.

Generally, eye exams include glaucoma screening. They are recommended every two to four years between the ages of 40 and 65, and every one to two years after 65.



Breathe Easier Behind the Wheel



You may have wondered while driving: Does breathing in all these fumes harm my health? Yes, according to a recent study of North Carolina state troopers.

The study found that toxins from eroding road surfaces and contaminants from fuel combustion threaten your cardiovascular system. Breathing in substances such as benzene, carbon monoxide and sulfur may cause tissue inflammation, blood clotting and abnormal heartbeats (arrhythmia). **Protect yourself with the following precautions:**

- **USE** an air particle filter inside your car. Cabin air filters help eliminate common airborne pollutants from the interior of your vehicle.
- **KEEP** windows closed. Put the air conditioning on recirculation when in heavy traffic, in a tunnel or near a truck blasting dirty smoke.
- **AVOID** rush hour. Fumes and particles are much more plentiful on heavily traveled roads.
- **DONT** tailgate. You'll inhale less exhaust from the vehicle in front of you.

Body work: If you have heart problems and spend a lot of time in your car, check with your health care provider to make sure time on the road isn't aggravating your condition.

"The beginning is always today."—Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

NEXT MONTH: Eat to Lose