

HOPE

HEALTH LETTER



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“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

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Achoo!

Dealing with allergies

Seasonal allergies affect 35.9 million Americans. Although it is impossible to avoid allergy triggers altogether, there are ways to help minimize issues.

- Do a thorough spring cleaning. Wipe windows, bookshelves, and air conditioning vents that collected dust and mold.
- Delay early morning outdoor activities. Pollens are usually released between 5 and 10 a.m.
- Know your local pollen count. (National Allergy Bureau Website: www.aaaai.org/nab).
- If possible, use air conditioning instead of opening windows.
- When traveling in a car, keep windows up and the air conditioning on.
- Stay indoors on hot, dry, and windy days when allergens get stirred up.
- Don't hang your laundry out to dry. Allergens can collect on it.
- When mowing the lawn or raking leaves, wear a filter mask.
- Wash bedding weekly in hot water.
- Shower and wash your hair every night.
- Remove visible mold using non-toxic cleaning products such as undiluted vinegar or lemon juice mixed with a pinch of salt.
- Pay attention to high mold spore counts after heavy rains or in the evening.

Source: American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology

Chew on this

You may think of chewing gum as candy, but certain kinds can help to protect your teeth.

Not all gums are created equal, though. To date, the only gums with the American Dental Association's Seal are sugarless. Chewing sugarless gum has been shown to increase the flow of saliva, which can reduce plaque acid, strengthen teeth, and reduce tooth decay. Chewing sugar-containing gum also increases saliva flow, but the sugar it contains is used by plaque bacteria to produce decay-causing acids.

For a listing of ADA-approved gums, go to www.ada.org/productsearch.aspx

Source: American Dental Association, www.ada.org

Filling your toolbox

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outer aisle fresh

Spring clean your diet, but don't detox



Most detox diets suggest severely restricting or eliminating a certain type or types of food. Although it may be tempting to give detoxing a try to cleanse your body or shed pounds, Keri Gans, MS, RD, an American Dietetic Association spokesperson, says to resist.

"There is no scientific proof that a person needs to detox," Gans says. "A natural healthy diet is all a person needs."

If you're looking to spring clean your diet, here are a few pointers, according to Gans.

- **Get enough fiber — fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.** Fiber is a natural system-cleansing helper.
- **Set an eating schedule.** It may keep you satisfied and prevent overeating and/or eating things you shouldn't. Gans suggests eating every three to four hours.
- **Consult with a registered dietitian.** If you want help improving your eating habits and don't know where to start, consult with a registered dietitian who can give recommendations tailored to you. You can go to www.eatright.org to find a registered dietitian in your area.

Wild Rice, Morel and Pine Nut Pilaf

1 1/2 cups wild rice
1 small yellow onion, chopped fine
1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
6 to 10 morels, quartered
1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted
1 2/3 cups water
1 1/3 cups chicken broth
1 tsp. dried tarragon
1/4 tsp. ground pepper

Sauté onion in olive oil until soft. Add water, chicken broth, wild rice, tarragon, and pepper. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer 20 minutes. Add morels and pine nuts. Cook 20 minutes.

Serves 4: 174 calories, 10 g fat (1.3 g saturated fat), 2 mg cholesterol, 324 mg sodium, 18 g carbohydrate, 2.5 g fiber, 6 g protein.

Source: *Hope Health*

Radishes: More than just a pretty garnish

Radishes are an early spring arrival. Their peppery flavor comes from special plant compounds called glucosinolates. These powerful compounds help the body's natural cleansing systems. Radishes are also a good source of fiber, vitamin C, folate, and potassium, for a mere 19 calories per cup.

Although most people eat radishes raw, sliced or grated in salads, radishes are delicious sautéed or added to stir fry or pasta dishes, too.



Mushroom hunting how-to's

Although the season varies depending on the region, springtime is prime time for morel-mushroom hunting.

Typically, morels are found in moist areas around dying or dead elm, sycamore and ash trees, or in old apple orchards.

Make sure you know the difference between good morels and bad ones, which can be poisonous. For more on the difference, including pictures, visit www.thegreatmorel.com/falsemorel.html.

Source: www.thegreatmorel.com

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get moving



4 Fitness pick-me-ups

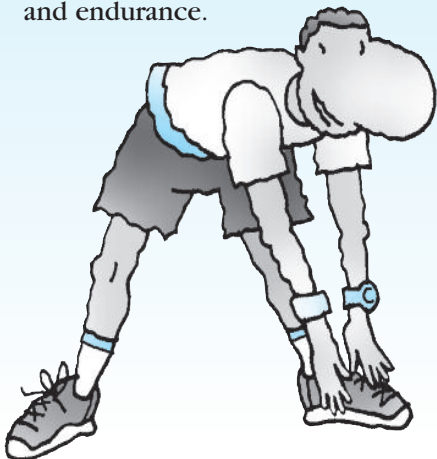
Trying to make it through a workout, only to find your energy level isn't where it needs to be? Here are ideas to give yourself a boost:

- **Adopt a personal mantra.** Find a positive phrase that you repeat when you are less-than-motivated to keep going through an activity. Maybe something like: "Try one more, just one more" — whether it's repetitions, minutes, laps, miles, whatever.
- **Make a competitive game out of your activity.** If you see other walkers/runners/swimmers/cyclists ahead of you try to catch them and then pass them. If you're on a walk with your dog, try to keep in step with your four-legged friend.
- **Pay attention to your breathing.** Try this next time you are just getting started or in the middle of your activity: Breathe in deeply through your nose only, and exhale hard out of your mouth.
- **Splash some water on your face.** Get off the treadmill or take a quick time-out from that kickboxing class. Even if you're outside walking in the park, you can head over to a drinking fountain for a quick, cold-water jolt.

Source: Sandy Reid, certified group fitness instructor

Warm up before you rev up

Take 8 to 10 minutes before you start an activity to warm up your body. It may reduce your risk of injury and increase your speed, strength, and endurance.



To get the most from your warm-up:

- Spend the first couple of minutes easing into the activity, to get blood circulating and muscles warmed up.
- Hold a stretch for 30 seconds to a minute for those body parts that you'll use most during your activity.

Source: Sandy Reid, certified group fitness instructor

Eco-exercise

Eco-exercise is a variation of whatever physical activity you happen to be doing at the time — whether it's running, walking, hiking, kayaking, etc.

While doing your activity, you also collect litter you find along the way.

According to Sam Huber, founder, editor, and on-the-move promoter of Eco-Runner, "Eco-Runners look beyond their watch, pace, PR (personal record), and internal goals... They add environmental awareness and sustainability to their list of running goals."

"Imagine if each of us took just a little time to pick up," Huber wrote on his blog.

To become an eco-exerciser, you just need your usual workout clothes, a trash bag (perhaps a biodegradable one), environmental awareness, and motivation.

- **Do as much as you want.** You don't necessarily need to dedicate every exercise session to the cause. Maybe select one day a week when you combine your activity with your pickup.
- **Go one step further.** If you want to make an even bigger impact, recycle paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, and other recyclables instead of throwing them in the trash.



Smart Living



Wash clothes in cold water. It uses less energy, which is good for the environment and your wallet.

Healthy surfing

The Web is full of health information. How do you know what's good? Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Consider the source.** Use recognized authorities. Is it the federal government, a nonprofit institution, a professional organization, a health system, a commercial organization, or an individual?
- **Focus on quality.** Does the site have an editorial board? Is the information reviewed?
- **Be a skeptic.** Does the site make health claims that seem too good to be true? Promise quick, dramatic, miraculous results? Is it the only site making these claims?
- **Look for evidence.** Rely on medical research, not opinion. Look for the author of the information, either an individual, or an organization.
- **Check for currency.** Is the information current? Look for dates on documents.
- **Beware of bias.** What is the purpose? Who is providing the funding? Who pays for the site?

Source: www.medlineplus.gov — A service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health



5 tips for healthy skin and hair

- **Use a conditioner after every time you shampoo your hair.** Although a conditioner can't repair hair, it may add shine, decrease static electricity, improve strength, and give some protection from harmful ultraviolet rays.
- **Try to include some lean protein in your diet.** Skin is made of cells that require protein, so eating protein is necessary for healthy skin.
- **If your skin feels dry, moisturize it.** The best time is after bathing when you can trap water in the skin.
- **Avoid smoking.** Smoking can expose skin to toxins that can speed up the aging of skin.
- **If you have acne, do not pick, pop, or squeeze blemishes.** These actions can irritate the skin, make acne worse, and increase the risk of scarring.

Source: American Academy of Dermatology

Lighter late-night snacking

Dinner is done, and bedtime is still hours away. For many people, the time in between can be filled with raiding the refrigerator for a little something extra. When hunger strikes in the evening, it can be tempting to dig into a favorite snack. But some foods can interfere with a good night's sleep and have the potential to derail a healthful eating plan.



Here are a few snacks that won't disturb your sleep or your healthy diet:

- Like to chomp on potato chips? Go for seasoned, air-popped popcorn or a handful of nuts instead.
- Sweet tooth need satisfying? Try fresh raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, and melon.
- Tend to be a scoop-of-ice-cream type? Consider fat-free yogurt or low-fat cottage cheese with fresh fruit such as pineapple.

Source: American Dietetic Association

Caring for caregivers

If you have a friend, family member, or co-worker who is a caregiver, you may want to consider:

- Offering to take the caregiver out for dinner and a movie
- Being a shoulder to cry on
- Taking over the grocery shopping every other week or once a month
- Mowing the lawn or shoveling the snow
- Coordinating a volunteer team to help with specific caregiving tasks
- Making sure to call every week just to check in
- Researching resources that may help
- Helping with insurance and other paperwork
- Taking the child or aging parent out for a few hours so the caregiver can relax at home
- Letting the caregiver know when you're available and what you can do in case a need arises

If you are a caregiver, you may want to:

- Take time for yourself and your other family members. Even a few minutes a day can make a big difference.
- Thank yourself and everyone in your family. Spouses should acknowledge each other's hard work and make sure to spend time alone, as a couple. Remember to thank children who may be helping out, too.

Sources: National Family Caregivers Association; Autism Society of America

Think like a champion



- **Expect to win.** Whatever you're doing, believe you will succeed.
- **Celebrate small victories.** Build confidence by recognizing small wins. It may give you the gumption to work harder and believe that you can do greater things.
- **Focus on what you get to do, not what you have to do.** Think of life and work as gifts, not chores. This may help you commit to the task and appreciate the process.

Source: Jon Gordon, author of *The Energy Bus*, *Training Camp*, *The No Complaining Rule*, and *Soup: a Recipe to Nourish your Team and Culture*

3 ways to boost your

brain power

- **Give yourself a time out.** If you're feeling sluggish and need to recharge your brain, you may want to try closing your eyes and meditating. According to a University of Kentucky study, subjects who meditated for 40 minutes were more responsive than those who took a nap, read, or engaged in light conversation.
- **Practice neurobics.** Just like aerobics work different muscle groups, neurobics focus on exercising different parts of the brain to keep them sharp, according to concept creator the late Lawrence C. Katz, a Duke University professor. Neurobics involves using one or more of your senses in a new way. Try getting dressed for work with your eyes closed. Take a completely new route to work.
- **Get moving.** Aerobic exercise may increase mental sharpness, memory, and your ability to handle various tasks, because activity can increase circulation and release chemicals that can improve creativity, information retention, and reaction time.

Sources: University of Kentucky; Duke University; University of Illinois

“How did the scarecrow know he didn't have a brain?”
— Unknown

Beware of tax-refund loans

Refund anticipation loans (RALs) are high-interest, short-term loans against future income tax refunds.

Loans generally last 10 to 14 days. Here's what you need to know:

- If calculated over a year, fees charged for RALs often equal triple-digit interest rates, which are much higher than annual percentage rates (APRs) on bank loans and credit cards. One recent study found APRs for RALs ranging from about 50% (for a \$10,000 loan) to nearly 500% (for a \$300 loan).
- Many RALs include additional charges such as application fees, processing fees, electronic-filing fees, and fees for same-day "instant" loans. The total cost is high when all components are added together.
- If the IRS disputes your tax return or intercepts your refund (e.g., unpaid student loans, taxes, or child support), you'll still owe the lender the full amount borrowed, plus additional fees if payments are late.
- RALs are often not much quicker than waiting for a refund from the IRS.

fiscal fitness



5 last-minute tax tips

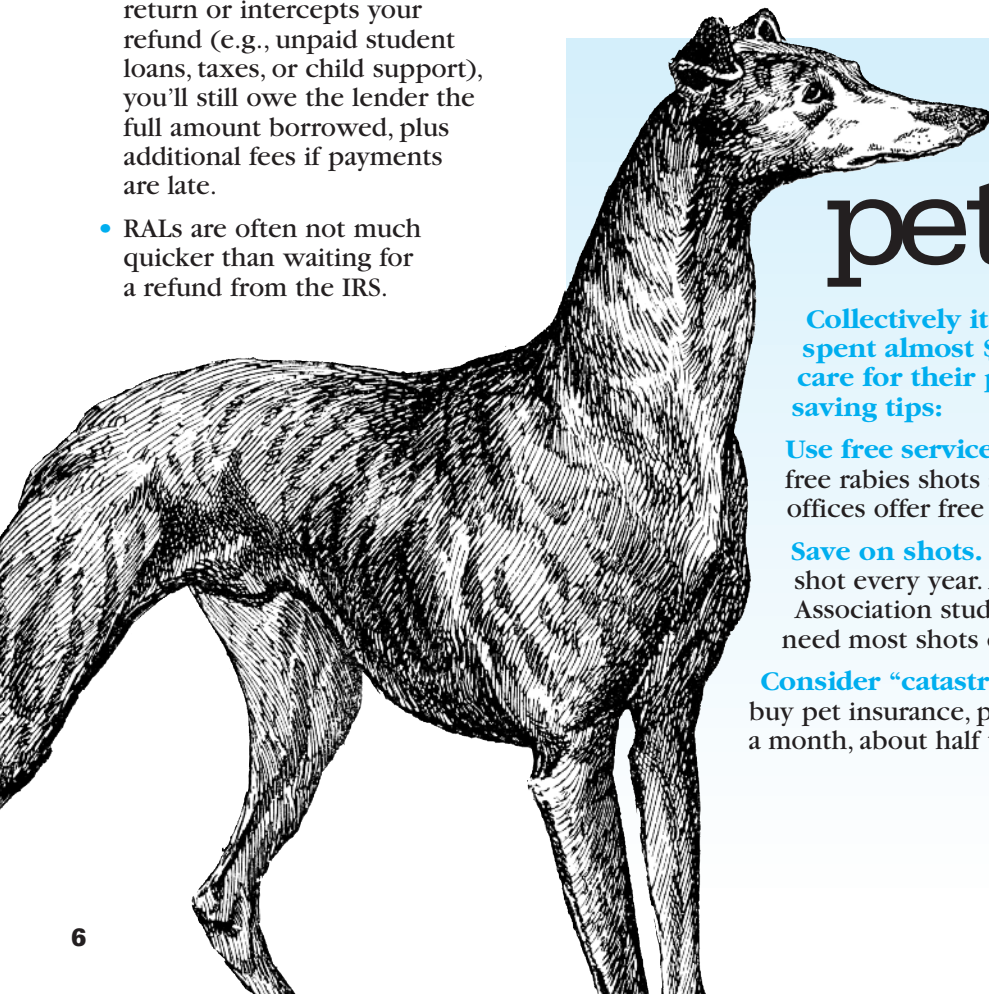
Give yourself credit. Don't forget to take the Making Work Pay credit, which was part of the 2009 stimulus package. Singles can receive a credit up to \$400 and married couples up to \$800.

Beware of the Alternative Minimum Tax. Do your tax calculation the "normal" way. Then run your tax data through the online IRS alternative minimum tax tool, the AMT Assistant, at www.irs.gov. The results will tell you if you need to do a full AMT calculation.

Watch for changes. Don't copy numbers from last year's tax form. The standard deduction, personal exemptions, and marginal tax brackets are indexed annually for inflation.

Review your records. IRS data indicate that many people don't take legal write-offs such as union dues, job-search expenses, non-cash charitable contributions, volunteer expenses, points on a refinanced mortgage, and tax-preparation fees.

Consider an extension. If you can't finish your tax return by April 15, get a six-month extension by filing Form 4868. You still need to pay what you owe, however. An extension is for filing only — not for payment of tax.



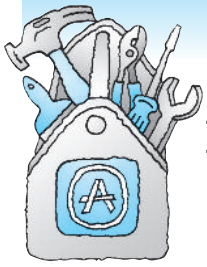
Pay less for pet health

Collectively it was estimated that Americans spent almost \$24 billion last year on health care for their pets. Consider these money-saving tips:

Use free services. Some towns and cities provide free rabies shots annually. Some Humane Society offices offer free or low-cost neutering.

Save on shots. Your pet may not need every shot every year. An American Animal Hospital Association study concluded that adult dogs need most shots once every three years.

Consider "catastrophic" pet insurance. If you buy pet insurance, policies typically cost \$15 to \$25 a month, about half the cost of standard policies.



issue insight

Filling your toolbox: Head online for more health resources

Play with your health! Log on to Apr.HopeHealth.com for videos, resources and tools that give a fun, new twist to health. Or, scan the Quick-Response code below with your smart phone to get there.

Here's what you'll find at Apr.HopeHealth.com:

- A one-minute video on spring cleaning your diet
- A one-minute video on simple stretches
- A free, simple, entertaining, fun, and user-friendly mobile jokes application
- A tip sheet listing plants that tend to minimize allergy symptoms and ones that produce high pollen levels

Scan with your smart phone



Need the reader?
QRcurious.com



Living with autism: **A mom's perspective**

April is Autism Awareness Month. Autism affects entire families. Ange Hemmer, of the greater St. Louis area, knows this all too well. Ange is a mother of two boys on the autism spectrum. Her boys — ages 11 and 7 — are both diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder — Not Otherwise Specific (PDD-NOS).

Q: What do you wish you would have learned earlier or done differently?

A: Like many parents who find out their child has autism, when Zach, 11, was diagnosed I became obsessed with the best treatments and interventions. I spent more time researching than I did actively engaging with my son. I looked at him as a “project in crisis” instead of as a little boy needing and wanting my love and attention. When Kaden, 7, was diagnosed, I had learned that less time should be focused on “fixing” my boys and more time should be spent living and learning with them at their own developmental pace. I discovered that my time and energy was better spent changing societal perspectives rather than trying to make my boys “typical.” I wish I would've figured this out much earlier.

For information about autism, go to www.autism-society.org

April Health Observances

Foot Health Awareness Month

What's underfoot?

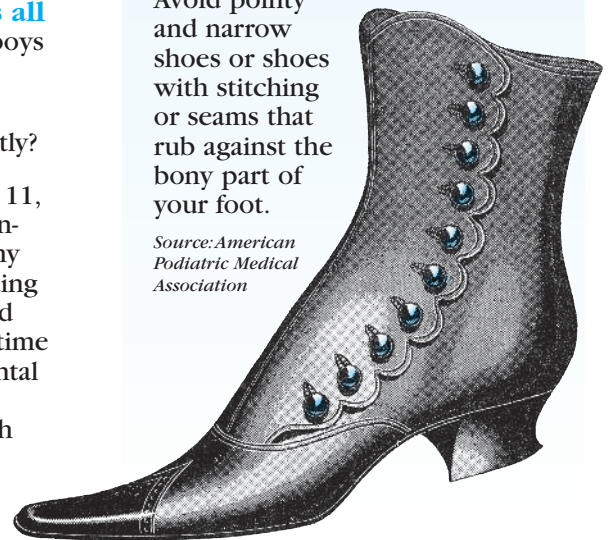
Ingrown toenails can result from improper trimming or too much pressure on your feet. Other causes include poor foot structure, heredity, trauma, or foot deformities.

Avoid tight-fitting shoes and socks. Be sure to trim nails straight across using toenail clippers. Make sure not to round nail edges. If you develop an ingrown toenail, see a podiatrist.

Bunions are bumps at the base of the big toe that can be swollen, tender, or painful when wearing shoes. They can be caused by misalignment of joints. Other factors may include ill-fitting shoes, heredity, trauma, and arthritis.

Avoid pointy and narrow shoes or shoes with stitching or seams that rub against the bony part of your foot.

Source: American Podiatric Medical Association



smart Living



Your shoes are too tight if you can't stick your finger in between your heel and the back of your shoes.

The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your health-care providers, not to replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

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HOPE HEALTH LETTER

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weight control

Hidden-calorie culprits

Coffee creamer — Most creamers, powdered or liquid, put a serving size at a teaspoon. Many people, though, can put in a tablespoon (three teaspoons). Multiply that by three or four cups of coffee, and you end up with nine to 12 servings of creamer.

Granola — Oatmeal, nuts, raisins — all good, right? Yes, granola has redeeming qualities, but most also contain plenty of sugar. Most brands come in at more than 200 calories per serving. And for many, that's only a half cup. Double that, add milk, and your breakfast is easily more than 500 calories.

Salad dressing — The greens and other veggies may be nutritious and low-cal, but the salad dressing may not be. Some dressings are more than 100 calories for 2 tablespoons, which is conservative for what many people put on their salads.

Source: Center for Science in the Public Interest



Hard-boiled egg expirations

With Easter fast approaching, many folks will stock up on eggs.

- **Raw eggs** can last three to five weeks in the refrigerator.
- **Hard-boiled eggs**, because their shells have become slightly porous during the boiling process, last about a week in the refrigerator and two hours at room temperature.

Sources: Netwellness; Egg Safety Center

Smart Living



Usually cooked leftovers stored in the refrigerator should be eaten within four days.

body, mind, & soul

“My own prescription for health is less paperwork and more running barefoot through the grass.”

— Terri Guillemets

“Did you ever stop to taste a carrot? Not just eat it, but taste it? You can't taste the beauty and energy of the earth in a Twinkie.”

— Astrid Alaudia

“It's good to have money and the things that money can buy, but it's good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure that you haven't lost the things that money can't buy.”

— George Horace Lorimer

“Waste your money and you're only out of money, but waste your time and you've lost part of your life.”

— Michael Leboeuf