

HOPE

HEALTH LETTER

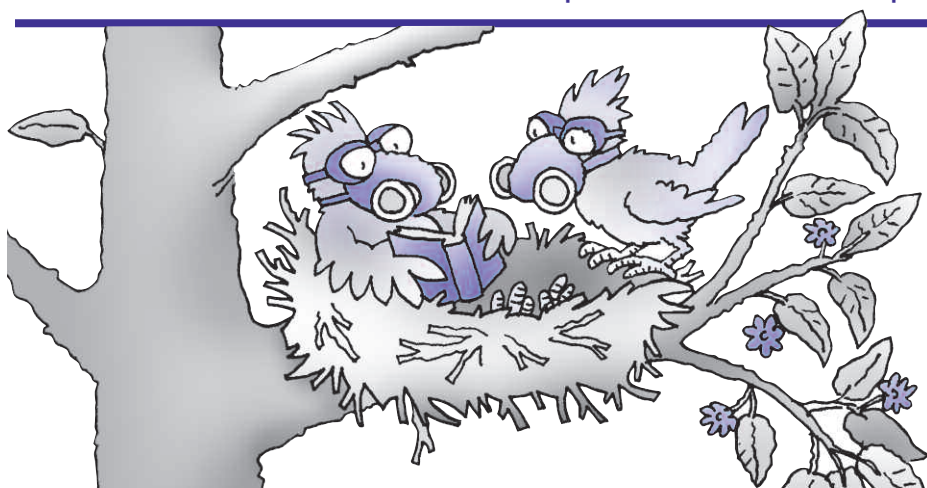


VOL. 30, NO. 4

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

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Seasonal allergies

Clearing up some common misconceptions about what makes you sneeze

1. Flowers cause most seasonal allergies.

In reality, wind-pollinated plants like grasses, trees, and weeds are the principal culprits in most allergies. Their tiny pollen particles can be blown hundreds of miles. Flowers are pollinated by insects, and their pollen particles are heavy and usually fall to the ground.

2. Moving (especially to a drier climate) will relieve your allergies.

Possibly. You might escape one cause, only to find you're allergic to different plants in your new environment. If you do move, you may not show symptoms to new allergies for over a year.

3. Short-haired pets won't irritate your allergies.

Many people believe this, but dander (dead skin cells), saliva, or urine are the actual source of pet allergies, not hair or fur. There are no truly hypoallergenic breeds of cats or dogs.

4. You can't develop allergies as an adult.

The truth is, adults can become allergic to things they weren't allergic to earlier in life. Moving from the West Coast to the East Coast, for example, may expose you to different sources for allergies.

Source: American Academy of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology

Allergy relief

Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your eyes and face. Pollen collects on all outdoor surfaces, including car doors, mailboxes, etc. Avoid running your fingers through your hair, and wash your hair before going to bed if you spend a lot of time outdoors.

If possible, stay indoors between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., the peak pollen hours. Close the windows in your home and car, and use the air conditioner instead.

Information on the pollen count where you live can be found at www.aaaai.org.

Smart money



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SIMPLE OR COMPLEX?

How to choose the best carbohydrates



Carbohydrates supply the body with the quick energy that's needed for all its various functions — whether it's weight lifting or digesting a meal.

Not all carbs are created equal, however. Make complex carbohydrates like those found in fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes your first choice. They're high in fiber and nutritional value, and can help you control blood sugar and keep you feeling full longer.

Sweets, sodas, and snack foods are packed with simple or refined carbohydrates. They may satisfy your sweet tooth but have little nutritional value and can leave you feeling hungry in just a short time.

For some quick comparisons

| Food | Calories | Carbohydrates | Fiber |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------|-------|
| 4 oz. fresh apple | 32 | 8 g | 6 g |
| 4 oz. milk chocolate | 104 | 12 g | 1 g |
| 1 cup brown rice, cooked | 216 | 45 g | 4 g |
| 1 cup white rice, cooked | 205 | 44 g | 1 g |

Source: *Nutrition: Concepts and Controversies, Ninth Edition*, by Frances Sizer and Eleanor Whitney, Thomson Wadsworth Publishing

Romaine rules

When it comes to vitamins and minerals, romaine is the winner among lettuce.

Its crisp, long leaves are a good source of vitamins K and C, potassium, and fiber. To keep lettuce and other greens fresh longer, wrap them in a damp paper towel and store them in perforated plastic bags in the crisper section of the refrigerator.

Greek Salad

A heart-healthy Mediterranean favorite

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 12 cups romaine lettuce, torn into bite-sized pieces
- 1 green pepper, seeds removed, sliced into thin strips
- 2 cups cucumber, peeled, seeded, sliced
- 4 (1/4-inch) slices red onion, separated into rings
- 4 tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 12 Kalamata olives, pitted
- ½ cup feta cheese

In large bowl, whisk together olive oil, vinegar, oregano, salt, and pepper. Add lettuce, cucumber, onion, and green pepper. Toss gently until evenly coated with dressing. Divide among 4 plates. Garnish with tomatoes and olives. Sprinkle with feta cheese.

Serves 4. Per serving: 335 calories, 8 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 26 g fat (16 g monounsaturated), 7 g fiber, 565 mg sodium.

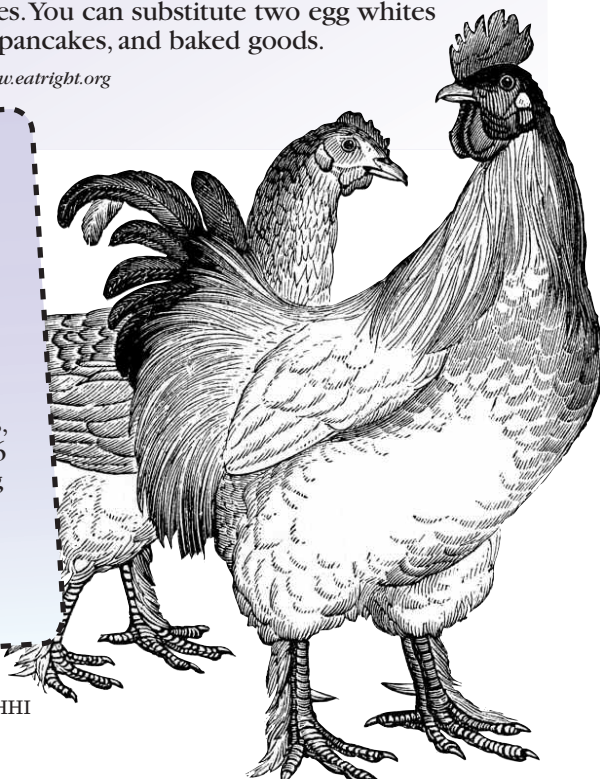
Egg-cellent information

Store eggs on a shelf inside the refrigerator where the temperature is cooler — not in the door.

Hard-boiled eggs do not keep as well as raw eggs, and like any protein should not be kept out of the refrigerator longer than two hours.

If you need to restrict eggs in your diet, the fat and cholesterol are found in the egg yolks, not the whites. You can substitute two egg whites for one whole egg in breads, pancakes, and baked goods.

Source: American Dietetic Association, www.eatright.org



get moving



STAYING MOTIVATED

4 reasons to work with a personal trainer

The right personal trainer can help you...

1. Develop an individualized program that meets your specific needs and goals.
2. Keep your commitment to exercise regularly.
3. Learn proper techniques that can help prevent injury.
4. Add variety and avoid boredom in your workout routines.

Before you hire a personal trainer, ask these questions:

- What are your qualifications and certifications?*
- What are your areas of specialization?
- How would you help me reach my personal goals?
- Do you have liability insurance?
- What are your costs?
- Will you provide the names of former clients I can contact?

* A professional trainer should be educated in physiology, health promotion, athletic training, or a similar field. He or she should also be trained in CPR and have certification from an organization such as the American College of Sports Medicine, the YMCA, or the American Council on Exercise.

Source: American Council on Exercise

The fountain of youth

People who are active and fit in their 30s and 40s are healthier than their sedentary counterparts and generally maintain that advantage well beyond their 50s if they continue their healthy habits.

Most adults begin to experience declines in cardiovascular fitness and aerobic capacity around age 45. The drop goes much faster, however, for people who are inactive, overweight, and smoke.

"You have to exercise. It's now becoming an established fact," says Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum, a spokesperson for the American Heart Association. "If you don't incorporate it into your life, you're going to see the effects. You'll get sicker sooner."

Source: Archives of Internal Medicine, Vol. 169, pg. 1781

FROM HEAD TO TOE

Gear up for sports safety

Protective gear may lack a fashion "cool factor," but it can keep athletes of any age safe from many common sports injuries.

A helmet is the most important piece of equipment and is mandatory for bicycling, football, and roller sports like skateboarding. It can prevent serious brain injuries, as well as fractures in the face. Make sure helmets fit properly and are not worn tipped back on the head.

Protective eyewear is needed for baseball, basketball, handball, and racquet sports like squash.

Mouth guards act as a shock absorber for the teeth and jaws against flying balls, sticks, or elbows.

Chest guards that shield the heart and ribs are required in baseball for umpires and catchers, and recommended for other high-velocity sports involving balls or pucks.

Shoulder pads protect against collarbone fractures and joint separation in tackling sports.

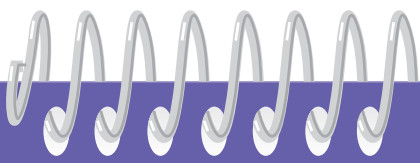
Wrist, elbow, and knee pads cushion falls and prevent fractures and tendon injuries in roller sports, skateboarding, and snowboarding.

The right shoe for the sport can help prevent stress fractures in the feet and also protect knees. Taping ankles can prevent sprained ankles, the most common sports injury.

Sources: Northwest Health, Spring 2009, published by Group Health Cooperative, Seattle, Washington; Civista Medical Center, La Plata County, Maryland



You'll be more productive if you plan something to look forward to each day.



Doc Talk

POWER TO THE PATIENT

Financial Stress and Your Health

We've heard a lot about how poor health can create financial stress. But we hear less about the impact of financial stress on health. Financial stressors such as job insecurity, job loss, and home foreclosure can increase the body's level of stress hormones. Over time, these stress hormones can have a significant impact on our health. They may raise the risk of heart disease and atherosclerosis (hardening and blockages of the arteries) as well as contribute to anxiety, depression, and reduced immunity. To help reduce the impact of financial stress:

1. Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day.
2. Seek out the social support of friends and family.
3. Get 7-8 hours of sleep every night.
4. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and avoid fatty foods, especially foods high in trans fats and saturated fats (e.g., fatty meats, chicken with the skin, French fries).
5. If you're feeling blue or down, get help from your doctor or a mental health professional.
6. Keep up with disease prevention such as immunizations, dental care, blood pressure testing, and screenings for colorectal cancer (stool test for blood) and breast and cervical cancer.

While these steps may not eliminate financial stress, they may help reduce its negative impact on your health.

William J. Mayer, MD, MPH
Medical Editor

Do you have a subject you would like the doctor to discuss? E-mail DocTalk@HopeHealth.com.



Clothing & sun protection

If sun-protective clothing is out of your budget, the color of your clothing can make a difference when it comes to shielding your skin from damaging UV radiation.

Deep blue and red cotton fabrics seem to block the most UV light, while yellow hues block the least.

No matter what you're wearing, use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 when you plan to be outside for more than 15 minutes.

Source: American Chemical Society, Industrial and Engineering Chemistry Research

Asleep at the wheel

You're dreaming if you think sheer willpower can keep you awake when you're driving and start to feel sleepy.

It only takes a few seconds of reduced awareness to cause a crash, and people underestimate how tired they are, says Thomas Balkin of the National Sleep Foundation. Drowsy driving was linked to more than 2 million accidents or near misses over the past year.

Pull over and give the wheel to someone else or take a short nap if you notice any of these signs of drowsy driving:

- Difficulty focusing
- Daydreaming
- Forgetting the last few miles you've driven
- Repeated yawning, heavy eyelids, and irritability

Source: National Sleep Foundation

Healthy

Timely Wellness News & Ideas

Stock your pantry with these power foods

1. Non-meat sources of protein such as beans, lentils, and other legumes
2. Peanut butter is another quick protein source and can be spread on apples and celery as well as breads and crackers
3. Old-fashioned oatmeal, brown rice, and other whole grains
4. Almonds and walnuts for heart-healthy omega-3 oils
5. Canned tuna or salmon. (The American Heart Association recommends eating fish twice a week.)
6. Low-sodium canned fruits and vegetables
7. 100% whole-grain crackers for quick snacks

Smart Living



Back up your files with an external hard drive in the event your computer crashes.

Money as motivation

A financial incentive may help some people lose weight, quit smoking, or change other unhealthy behaviors.

Make this work for you by setting a realistic goal, such as losing a certain amount of weight by a specific date. Then put aside a sum of cash. If you don't achieve your goal by your target date, give the money to a charity of your choice. To keep yourself accountable, share your intention with someone else.

Source: University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

Snip-its!

Turn the page for stress relief

Reading out loud to a child or an elderly person can be a fun and entertaining way to tone down the stress in your own life.

Find a book you love or ask the person to choose one. Have fun impersonating the characters. You'll bring happiness to the other person, and that will automatically make you feel better.

*Source: 101 Ways to Beat Stress NOW
by Eric Schnieder, Allegro Corporation*

Help for aching knees

Tai Chi, a martial art that combines gentle mind and body exercises, may help relieve knee pain related to osteoarthritis.

Seniors who practiced Tai Chi for an hour twice a week reported significantly less knee pain than participants in the same study who took hour-long classes on diet and nutrition that included 20 minutes of stretching.

The Tai Chi sessions consisted of 30 minutes of movement, 10 minutes each of stretching and breathing exercises, and 10 minutes of reflection. In addition to reduced knee pain, participants who practiced Tai Chi reported less depression and better mobility and overall health.

Source: Arthritis Care & Research, Vol. 61, pg. 1545

Preventing heel pain

Always wear supportive shoes, avoid walking barefoot, and stretch your feet prior to exercising.

Weight gain, worn-out shoes, walking barefoot, and increased activity can cause plantar fasciitis, the most common cause of foot pain. Ice your heel if you do feel pain.

Source: The American Podiatric Medical Association, www.apma.org

Diabetes news

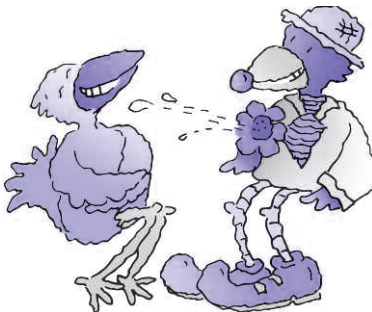
Weight loss and regular exercise may trump medication when it comes to delaying or preventing type 2 diabetes.

Over one 10-year study, people at increased risk for diabetes who lost weight through controlling calories and fat and exercising at least 150 minutes a week reduced their risk of developing diabetes by 34%. Participants in the same study who took medication to prevent diabetes saw an 18% lower risk.

Source: The Lancet, Vol. 374, pg. 1677



Find something to laugh about every day. April is national humor month.



Honesty is the best policy

Telling your doctor "little white lies" may lead to expensive diagnostic procedures, unneeded referrals to specialists, or a delayed diagnosis for a serious problem.

Be honest about how much you smoke or drink. Women who say they don't smoke, to get a prescription for birth control pills, for example, can increase their risk for stroke. Your doctor also needs to know about all the medications you're taking, as well as if you're not taking prescription medications as directed.

Coming clean may be uncomfortable for you, but more than likely your doctor will be accepting and understanding.

April Health Observances

Autism Awareness

From birth to 5 years, children should reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, and act.

A delay in any of these could indicate a developmental problem such as autism. You can fill out an interactive checklist to record your child's development and share it with your pediatrician by going to www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html. The earlier autism is diagnosed, the more likely a child may benefit from treatment.

Donate Life

In addition to vital organs like the heart, kidney, and liver, organ donors provide corneas to restore vision, bone and connective tissue to rebuild bones, and pancreatic cells that cure or improve diabetes. People of all ages can be donors. Designate your wishes to be a donor on your driver's license, and make sure your family is aware of them.

One person's decision to be a donor can save or improve the lives of up to 50 people. More information is available at www.organdonor.gov/.

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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the whole you

INDOOR AIR

How to keep mold out of your home

Exposure to mold can trigger allergies and asthma, irritate eyes and skin, and possibly lead to more serious reactions.

To keep mold in check:

- Avoid humidifiers if possible, because they promote mold growth.
- Ventilate bathrooms, basements, and other dark, moist places where mold can grow. Keep a light on in closets and use a dehumidifier in basements.
- Avoid wallpaper and carpets in bathrooms, as mold can grow under them.
- Before painting a room, add a mold-inhibiting agent such as No More Mildew or M-1 to the paint.
- Promptly get rid of any carpets or upholstered items that have been water-soaked.
- Consider getting your carpets treated with mold or mildew inhibitors.
- Use a mild bleach solution (one cup of bleach to one gallon of water) to clean bathrooms and other areas where mold grows.
- During very humid weather, run the air conditioner or use a dehumidifier.

Sources: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital



Snoring is no laughing matter

Loud snoring can be a sign of sleep apnea, a condition that increases your risk for high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.

People with sleep apnea may stop breathing several times during the night, or seem as if they are holding their breath. Daytime sleepiness, trouble concentrating, irritability, and forgetfulness are other symptoms.

Being overweight often leads to sleep apnea, but even modest weight loss may improve your breathing and reduce snoring. Sleeping on your side may also help. Drinking alcohol less than four hours before going to bed, and certain medications, especially sleeping pills, can contribute to sleep apnea.

Talk to your doctor about any signs of sleep apnea. After medical evaluation and diagnosis, sleep apnea can be treated with airway machines, certain prescription dental appliances, and devices that keep you from sleeping on your back.

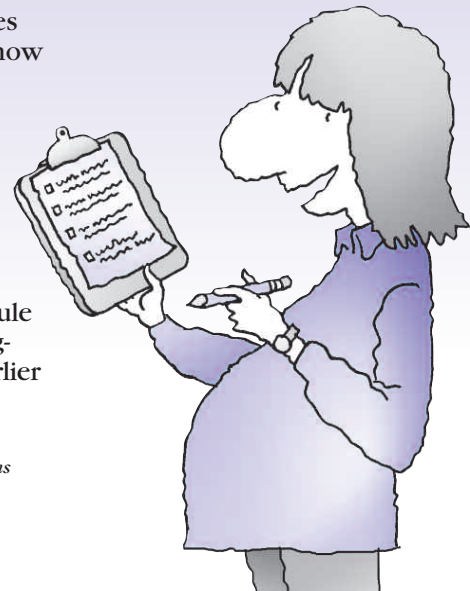
Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

MAKE ROOM FOR BABY

A checklist to help delivery day go smoothly

- Know your doctor's phone number for any time of day.
- Ask your doctor what he or she requires when you go into labor, such as whether or not you should go immediately to the hospital.
- Figure out how long it takes to get to the hospital and how you're going to get there.
- Talk with your doctor before you go into labor about your preferences for managing pain.
- Unless it is necessary for your health or the health of your baby, do not schedule a delivery before your pregnancy is at 39 weeks — earlier delivery can cause health problems for your baby.

Source: American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists



fiscal fitness

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

Making your health-care wishes known

Whether you're 18 or 80, it's important to think about what kind of health-care treatment you want if you become ill and cannot make decisions for yourself.

Advance directives allow you to put your wishes in writing before a crisis. Without these documents, you risk having the state or court make decisions for you. Common types of advance directives include:

Advance Directive for Health Care — allows you to stipulate what type of life-prolonging care you want if you cannot make decisions for yourself. It's also known as a living will.

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care — allows you to name someone to make health-care decisions for you when you cannot make them for yourself. The designated person is required by law to follow the wishes stated in your directives.

Make sure your family and physician are aware of your advance directives. Laws vary from state to state, so it is wise to consult an attorney before you finalize these legal documents. Free forms and state-specific information are also available at www.caringinfo.org.

Source: American Hospital Association, www.putitinwriting.org



An interesting fact...

Paying just \$1 more a day (\$30 a month) on the minimum monthly payment due on a \$5,000, \$10,000, or \$15,000 credit card balance with 17% interest will save you \$7,624, \$12,615, and \$16,168, respectively, in interest payments.

Source: Barbara O'Neill, PhD, CFP Extension Specialist in Financial Resource Management, Rutgers University Cooperative Extension



When you go shopping...

Take a calculator. You're likely to spend less if you know precisely how much you're spending before you get to the cash register. Whether it's for groceries or home repairs, enter the total amount you want to spend (\$100, for example) into the calculator. Whenever you put an item into your cart, subtract the amount. When you get to zero, it's time to stop.

SMART MONEY

Use these 5 keywords for your financial guide

When you map out your financial goals, remember the letters in the word *smart*. Make your goal:

Specific. You want to buy a car, for example.

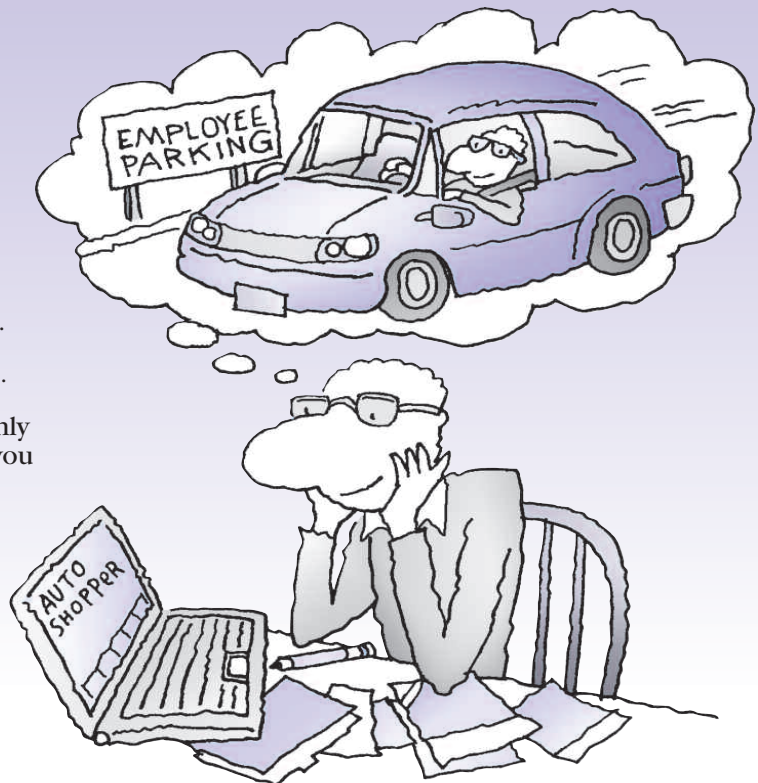
Measurable: You know how much it costs.

Achievable: The goal is realistic. The monthly payments fit your budget or you can afford it if you save "X number of dollars" every month for a set amount of time.

Relevant: You need the car to get to work.

Trackable: You can chart your progress (weekly or monthly) to know if you're on target to reach your goal in the specified time.

Source: National Endowment for Financial Education, www.nefe.org



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HOPE HEALTH LETTER

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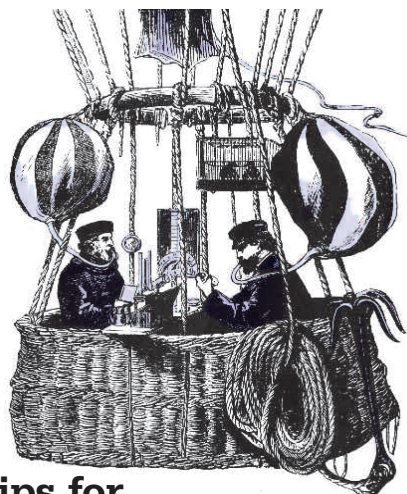
weight control

Questions to ask yourself before you start a diet

You'll increase your chances for success if you can answer yes to the following questions:

1. Does the eating plan include foods from all the food groups (whole grains; fruits and vegetables; low-fat dairy products; lean protein like fish, poultry, and beans or legumes; and healthy fats)? Visit www.mypyramid.gov to learn more.
2. Does it allow you to eat your favorite foods and foods that you will enjoy eating for the rest of your life, not just a few weeks or months?
3. Are foods on the plan available at supermarkets where you usually shop?
4. Do the eating strategies fit your lifestyle and budget?
5. Does it include enough physical activity?

Sources: American Dietetic Association, www.eatright.org



Tips for hassle-free flying

- **Fly at non-peak times** such as early in the morning on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Saturday, when flights are less full and security lines are shorter.
- **Find out if your airline offers one-day or monthly passes to airport VIP lounges** in case you are delayed or have a long wait.
- **Wear shoes that you can slip in and out of easily at security**, and put items like belts and wallets in a carry-on bag before reaching the checkpoint.
- **Avoid the in-air wait for the beverage cart** by buying bottled water after you go through the security gate. Screeners limit the size of liquids to 3 oz. at checkpoints.

body, mind, & soul

“If you destroy a bridge, be sure you can swim.”

— African proverb

“Write injuries in sand, kindnesses in marble.”

— French proverb

“You’ve got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was.”

— Irish proverb

“Fall seven times. Get up eight.”

— Asian proverb

“Gratitude is the heart’s memory.”

— French proverb

“Be happy while you’re living, for you’re a long time dead.”

— Scottish proverb