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Prebiotics and Probiotics

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Grape Seed Extract

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It is possible to bring healthy habits into a busy lifestyle while still enjoying food, but it requires personal evaluation and commitment.

16 Prebiotics and Probiotics

As society has continued to use more antibiotics, infectious bacteria and viruses have become increasingly resistant to many of the more commonly prescribed antibiotics.



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With fall festivities and Christmas closing in, we are about to become busy in preparation for it all. As we enter into this holiday season, let's remember to take time to relax and enjoy the special time with our friends and families.

This holiday season, plan ahead to reduce stress, relax and enjoy time with your family and friends.

Day-to-day life can be plenty stressful all on its own, but with the laundry list of extra duties we find ourselves performing during the holiday season—preparing for guests, entertaining family, school and church pageants, and cooking holiday goodies—even the most organized person can find themselves falling behind. Too often, when the stresses of life start taking their toll, it is easy to fall back into old habits. When we are overstressed we tend to do the exact opposite of what we should, and resort to comfort food and napping instead of healthy food and exercising.

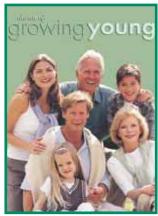
If ever there is a time when it is important to live a healthy lifestyle, it's when we are stressed. Stress can be an underlying factor in everything from headaches to heart attacks. Stress weakens our immune systems, opening the door for things like colds and flu. Nobody wants to be stuck in bed with a nasty cold while the rest of the family is gathering around the table and having a wonderful time. That's why it is so important to use caution during these busy months. Beat stress by making sure to leave time for exercising. Physical activities are great for relieving stress. Making sure your body is properly nourished and well rested is equally important.

When life gets too stressful, it becomes easy to lose focus and miss out on what really matters—spending time with each other. We often end up focusing on finding that perfect gift for someone or making sure the house is spotless before the guests arrive. It would be nice if we could add some time onto each day, just enough to allow time for a good night's rest after a full day of activities, shopping and cleaning. Of course, that's impossible. We have to juggle schedules and rearrange our lives and do our best to make time to rest when we can. It helps to plan ahead and set goals throughout the week. In order to ensure a full night's rest, set a cut-off time in the evening after which no more work is done. Most important, start with realistic goals and make sure you remember to take care of yourself. That means pacing yourself and eating right—which will help provide energy to keep going.

When we take on too many activities, when our lives become too complicated, it becomes so much more difficult to enjoy this wonderful time of the year. Then, instead of enjoying special time spent with friends and family we are either too tired to enjoy ourselves or too sick to even leave the house. It helps to pick and choose the activities you plan on being a part of. It would be nice if we could fit every party and every single

social engagement into our lives, but that just isn't realistic.

With fall festivities and Christmas closing in, we are about to become busy in preparation for it all. As we enter into this holiday season, let's remember to take time to relax and enjoy the special time with our friends and families. Instead of worrying about when the guests are going to arrive or how that special meal is going to turn out, focus on the smiles on your family's faces and enjoy your special time together.



Start Young. Stay Young.

Happy Holidays

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The latest in nutritional news

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Children who don't eat their vegetables may actually have a gene that heightens their sensitivity to bitter tastes. Parents who struggle to get their children to eat bitter vegetables such as broccoli and olives may have better results when offering sweeter vegetable choices, such as carrots or red peppers. Cooked vegetables may fare better too, as cooking generally reduces bitter flavors. Also, keep in mind that most of the health-promoting phytonutrients found in vegetables are also found in fruits, so be sure to familiarize your kids with a wide variety of fruits and keep a supply of the ones they like.

New research suggests that people who crave sweet snacks such as ice cream may also find fruit appealing. One study showed that while vegetable lovers tended to eat salty snacks, fruit lovers ate sugary snacks. Another study revealed that people who frequently snack on sweet foods also eat more fruit on a daily basis. Next time you feel your sweet tooth calling, try a piece of fruit. It may just do the trick, and it's loaded with fiber and phytonutrients missing from most man-made sweet treats.

Can eating fish actually slow down your heart? According to a new study, people who ate tuna or baked or broiled fish five or more times per week averaged 3.2 fewer heart beats per minute than people who consumed less than one portion of fish per month. The researchers also found the results to be true when compared to the concentrations of omega-3 fatty acids in the blood, so it's likely that taking fish oil nutritional supplements will have an effect similar to that of eating fish, if the quantities of omega-3 fats are the same.

Eat to beat stress. Zinc, vitamin C, B vitamins and magnesium are particularly effective at fighting stress. A diet consisting of whole grains, lean meats, healthy oils, and plenty of fruits and vegetables can help reduce the negative effects that stress has on the body. Be sure to include a wide range of fruits and vegetables, as well as high-quality food supplements that contain these nutrients, to effectively combat stress. USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) scientists have found that watermelons kept warm are healthier than ice-cold ones. This new evidence shows that the lycopene-rich summer picnic staple contains more nutrients when stored at room temperature than when stored in refrigerated conditions. Fresh off the vine watermelons were also lower in nutrients, suggesting that watermelons continue to produce lycopene, beta-carotene and other important nutrients after they have been picked.

Health nuts should chew on almonds. One serving of almonds, which are naturally low-carb, contains the same amount of antioxidant flavonoids as one serving of broccoli. Almonds are also packed full of nutrients, including vitamin E, magnesium, fiber, protein, calcium and iron. These delicious nuts are also being studied for their possible role in heart disease prevention and ability to help lower bad cholesterol.

IMPROVING YOUR Eating Style

Eating healthy is important for everyone, but doing so in a busy, fast-paced and stress-filled society confounds most of us. It is possible to bring healthy habits into a busy lifestyle while still enjoying food, but it requires personal evaluation and commitment. The results, though, are worth it. These four steps can help guide you away from bad habits and into a pattern of healthy eating.

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Evaluate Your Eating Habits

Many people go through life without realizing all of the food habits they have picked up along the way. The first step to improving your eating style is to recognize your eating habits and weaknesses. Are you always eating meals on the go, juggling competing demands while trying to fit in a quick meal? Are you a stress eater, using food to escape? Perhaps you have developed an excessive fast-food habit? Or maybe you are a social eater, not accustomed to monitoring your food intake while out with family and friends? These are just a few eating patterns that people can develop. The good news is that you are not alone; everyone has eating habits that can use improvement. How can you recognize yours?

Joanne Larsen, MS, RD, LD, a retired dietician and founder of the Web site www.dietitian.com, recommends recording your food intake. For example, set aside two weeks. During that time write down everything you eat and any other important details (such as whether you were alone, upset or busy). At the end of the two weeks, review your food intake journal and evaluate patterns you may notice.

Perhaps you notice that you are always hungry for a morning snack and have developed a habit of getting sugary snacks from the vending machine. Or perhaps it will become apparent that you

avoid cooking by eating fast food three nights a week. Whatever patterns you notice will give you a starting point for improving your eating. The only way to improve your eating style is to first recognize your patterns, so begin recording your food intake and see what kind of patterns you can uncover.

Create Livable, Small Steps to Address Problem Areas

The best thing you can do for yourself is to change slowly. Redoing your entire lifestyle overnight is not an effective method of change because the change will be too sudden and too overwhelming to maintain. If, on the other hand, you recognize your patterns and make small steps to change them, you will gradually improve your eating style for the long term. First choose one or two areas on which you want to focus (e.g. stress eating and late-night snacks), then brainstorm a few ways to effectively address these patterns. To ensure that you are not overwhelming yourself, formulate very specific changes that are livable and maintainable.

With that in mind, Catherine Christie, PhD, LD/N, director of nutrition programs at the University of North Florida, provides some suggestions for taking

"If you're a fast-food junkie, buy the child-size meals so you don't overeat ...try not to drink your calories: choose diet soft drinks and unsweetened teas." steps towards change. "If you know you are a stress eater, it is smart to eat more frequently so you don't have hunger as an excuse to eat. Also, exercise is a great [replacement] stress reliever... other nonfood stress relievers include calling a friend, soaking in a tub, and reading a book," she advises. "If you're a fast-food junkie, buy the child-size meals so you don't overeat...try not to drink your calories: choose diet soft drinks and unsweetened teas."

Other small steps include carrying healthy on-the-go snacks

(such as string cheese or peanut butter crackers), staying well hydrated to squelch hunger and, if you tend to eat when bored, keep low-fat/low-calorie snacks handy (such as crunchy vegetables or unbuttered popcorn).

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GRAPE SEED



Any fruits and vegetables act as excellent natural antioxidants, but few are as potent as grapes, and that's especially true for the seeds, believe it or not. Vitamins C, E and beta-carotene, and the fresh foods that contain them, have traditionally been thought to be the best providers of antioxidants, but more recently grape seed extract has been shown to provide many times the amount of antioxidants in most single vitamins. Antioxidants help to protect the body from the attack of free radicals, molecules that harm our cells and facilitate the aging process. Among other adverse effects, these free radicals can attack our DNA, creating all kinds of problems that our bodies have to deal with.

Grape seed extract, made primarily from the seeds of grapes, contains high concentrations of oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs), a group of compounds that are powerful free radical scavengers. OPCs in our diets naturally protect us from free radicals, preventing damage to our cells from harmful environmental pollutants such as cigarette smoke and other air pollutants.

As powerful and beneficial as they are, OPCs are not the only antioxidants found in grapes. Another important compound that is abundant in grape skins (and leaves) is resveratrol, which has been linked to supporting circulatory health and other healthy bodily processes. OPC-rich red wine is often credited for the socalled French paradox, a phenomenon in which the population of France demonstrates a relatively low instance of heart disease despite the popularity of diets rich in saturated fats and a relatively high instance of tobacco use—both major risk factors for these conditions.

The French paradox has only been associated with red wine, which has caused many people to assume that only red grapes contain these healthpromoting qualities. However, all varieties of grapes provide OPCs and other antioxidant compounds. But because the vast majority of these compounds are found in the skin and seeds of grapes and only red wine uses the whole grape in the complete fermenting process, white wine lovers do not receive all the benefits of its darker counterpart.

Literally hundreds of scientific studies have demonstrated the benefits of naturally occurring OPCs. In recent years researchers have demonstrated their value in supporting many metabolic processes throughout the whole body. These compounds' benefits in protecting against free radical attack, healthy circulation, immune function, skin and connective tissue health, healthy vision, and others have become well known.

nutrition

Eating Right

It seems as though everyone is busy these days. From parents who are working long hours to children who are involved in so many activities, people's schedules have very little free time, especially for eating healthy meals. Unfortunately, those busy schedules are forcing people to grab fast-food meals and make other unhealthy choices when they are hungry. If this cycle continues, it may lead to a variety of health problems, including obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and others.

Each family's diet will vary according to tradition, personal preferences, and their lifestyle, but the building blocks of a healthy and nutritious way of eating are the same for everyone. Nikki and David Goldbeck, co-authors of *Healthy Highways: The Traveler's Guide to Healthy Eating*, believe that even busy people who are always on the go can still make healthy choices when they are ready to eat.

on the Go

"People should consider a meatless meal now and then," said Nikki Goldbeck. "If you have never ordered a vegetarian platter, you should give it a try. This will automatically improve your diet because you will be consuming beans, grains, fruits, and other nutritious foods that will contain more fiber and lots less saturated fat," she said.

Allison Schwartz is a life coach from Los Angeles, specializing in leadership and self-empowerment strategies. She coaches clients in the United States and abroad to achieve meaningful goals, and always includes information on how people can eat healthier. "People are always on the go, and they want to eat food fast, and not just fast food," said Allison. She also sees an increase in the number of people who are eating when they become stressed.

"When you feel the urge to stress eat, use the tenminute rule: Wait ten minutes after the craving to get something to eat. If you still have a craving, try drinking water or eating celery instead as a replacement." Allison suggests that people on the go should start their day out with a protein shake. "Just add a cup of frozen fruit (I like mangoes and blueberries), a banana and a cup of water, some super greens and protein powder. It is nutritious, delicious and makes you feel good," she said.

Amanda Lerner is a holistic health counselor who divides her time between New York City and Los Angeles. She believes that people on the go need to slow down, especially when it comes time to eat.

"Just because you're eating fast food doesn't mean you have to eat food fast," Amanda said. "Slowing down is one of the most amazing ways to control your weight. Just try it. Merely slowing down and gaining some awareness around what you're eating can make a huge difference. No matter how busy you are, find time within time. The next time you order those Chicken McNuggets—even if you're eating them in your cube turn the computer monitor off and put some music on. Take a few deep breaths. Take a moment to appreciate the food. Sit up straight and relax as you chew."

IF YOU ARE ON THE GO AND NEED SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU EAT HEALTHIER, KEEP THIS LIST HANDY:

Slow down when you are ready to eat. You will enjoy your meal (and actually taste it), and it will digest

"If your schedule permits, eat a meal with the family at home. Studies prove that when people eat at home, they tend to eat healthier meals and also have an opportunity to catch up with the rest of the family.

"If you must eat on the go, look for nutritious options. Instead of a greasy burger, order chicken. Instead of french fries, order a side salad. Little things like that will make a big difference in your diet and in your overall health.

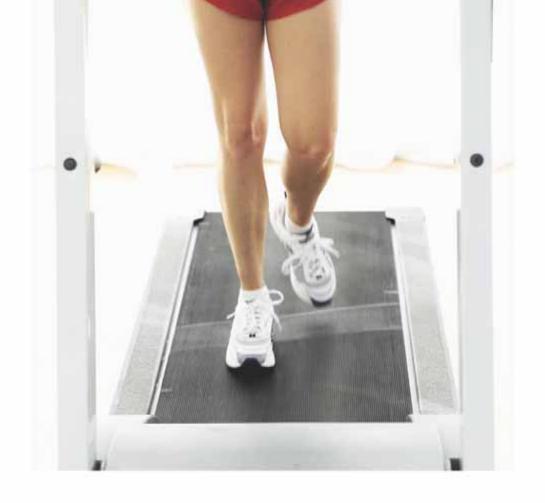
Avoid foods that are high in fats. Chef's are used to using batter, oil and other fats when they cook, so look for healthier choices on the menu. Many restaurants are now featuring healthy dishes in their selections, so order accordingly.

Try and skip dessert, but if you feel you cannot resist the temptation, look for a healthy desert. For example, a sorbet, baked custard or rice pudding will be a good choice, or, even better, simply fresh fruit.

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fitness





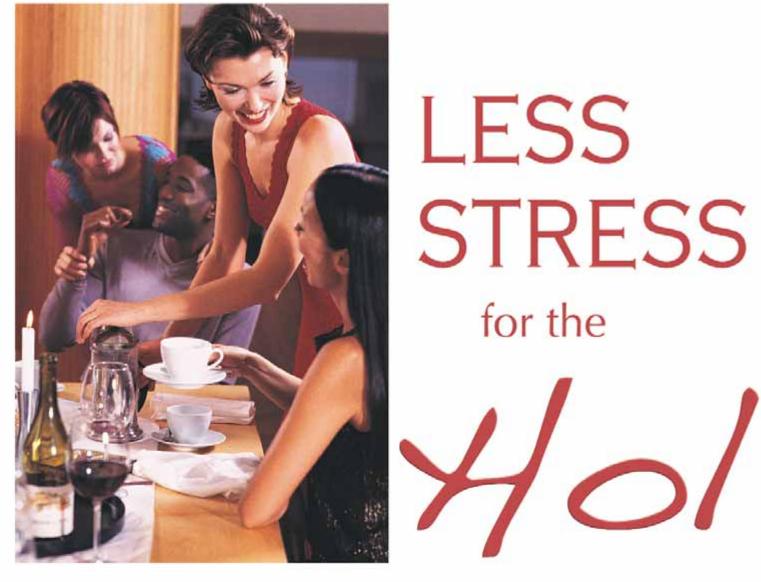
Exercise. Just hearing the word is enough to send shivers down the spines of couch potatoes everywhere. Maybe it conjures images of the exercise bike collecting dust in the garage or the folded-up treadmill tucked into the corner or those running shoes, still in immaculate condition, lost somewhere in the back of the closet.

There is always an excuse not to exercise; too tired, don't want to pay for a gym membership, no time during these shorter winter days, it's too cold out—the list goes on. Especially during the winter, it is so much easier to just wrap ourselves up under a warm blanket and sit inside drinking cocoa and watching television. But with all of the important health benefits that come from exercise, there really is no excuse great enough to warrant a sedentary lifestyle. Just thirty minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week offers a huge list of benefits, including warding off heart disease, preventing risky behaviors in children such as violence and drug use, reducing the risk of developing hip fractures, and even managing pain from already developed conditions, according to the World Health Organization.

The key to sustaining a physical fitness routine is finding an activity you actually enjoy doing. Some people absolutely loathe running, others just can't stand the thought of the repetitive nature of swimming laps in the pool. If you don't enjoy the activity you are doing, the chances that you can keep up a long-term regimen are slim to none. While one person might enjoy pedaling away on an exercise bike

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women's health



When I was a child, I looked forward to the holidays that my mother planned for us. It seemed like magic when the wonderful day arrived and our families gathered. Everything was perfect. The house was always polished and cleaned to perfection. There were all kinds of different foods to satisfy everyone's taste buds. Nobody was forgotten. My mother had a way of making her guests feel as if the world revolved around them.

I am the oldest daughter and when we lost our beloved mother it fell on my shoulders to make the magic. My family looked to me to provide that sense of security and continuity that we had for all of those years under her care. Her shoes would be very hard to fill. We had traditions that needed to be carried out and passed on to our children and grandchildren. There were favorite recipes from our grandmothers and even special dishes to prepare and display them in.

The media puts a lot of pressure on us to have the perfect holiday. Everywhere we look, we are bombarded with advertisements for the most beautiful decorations and foods that can be made from scratch. They make it look so simple and convince us that those exact items are necessary for our celebrations to be complete. Unfortunately, holidays can trigger depression in some people. The memories of lost loved ones or loneliness can be magnified at this time of the year.



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The first thing that I realized was that this could be very stressful if not done properly. The second thing was that I could not recreate the holidays that I remembered. I also recognized the need for planning. Start planning early, before the event. Making lists for groceries and chores that need to be done in advance is the first step in planning a holiday. Remember to have fun and enjoy your family and friends. Some of my fondest memories are of those times when things were not so perfect.

One thing that can make life easier for the hostess is to delegate. Your guests will enjoy participating. This gives the younger family members a chance to learn the traditions that have been handed down through the generations. Potlucks are a great way to delegate. I have found that asking for a little help not only takes some pressure off me, it also makes the guests feel as if they are contributing.

We also find it difficult saying no at times. We can overwhelm ourselves with obligations because we do not want to disappoint our friends and family. We must accept the fact that we cannot do everything and be everywhere.

A few weeks before the big event it is helpful to pull out the recipes you will be using and gather the ingredients that are not perishable. Plan recipes that

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Prebiot Probiot

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A society has continued to use more antibiotics, infectious bacteria and viruses have become increasingly resistant to many of the more commonly prescribed antibiotics. Even our most powerful ones are becoming less effective. With this concern in mind, a growing contingent of scientists and doctors is researching natural remedies.

In some cases, probiotics for example, the new remedies sought are actually nothing new at all. In fact, they can be quite old. Probiotics have been used for thousands of years—long before the concept of microorganisms was even understood. Ancient Babylonians used sour milk to cure gastrointestinal ailments. The famous Roman historian Plinius also recommended fermented milk products as treatment for gastroenteritis in 76 BC. Ancient healers may not have understood the concept of microorganisms living within their bodies, but they recognized the benefits obtained from eating certain foods. Modern science has taken that concept a step further and discovered the importance of an abundance of the proper microflora living inside our bodies, helping to regulate various functions and prevent illness.

The human body is made up of trillions of cells consisting of roughly 200 different types. But the body is also a natural host to 100 trillion bacterial cells consisting of about 500 species. That does not even include the billions of viruses and fungi living within the body. Some of these viruses and bacteria attack the body, causing all manner of illness and infection. However, many bacterial cells carry on mutually beneficial symbiotic relationships with the body. These nonpathogenic (unable to cause illness) beneficial bacteria are called probiotics. These microorganisms help the body

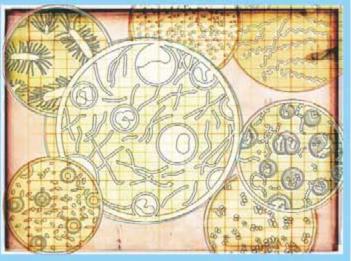
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in several important ways—aiding in digestion, stimulating the immune system and keeping harmful bacteria levels low by competing for resources.

The study of probiotics has surged in recent years as doctors are recognizing their potential. In many studies and clinical trials, probiotics show positive results in supporting health.

Of the roughly 500 species of bacteria thriving in the body, about 400 of them are capable of living in the digestive tract, surviving in a delicate balance. When this balance is



In one study, researchers found that the digestive linings of healthy individuals contained 30 times the amount of a specific probiotic bacteria when compared with levels found in those who suffered from colitis, an inflammatory colon condition that often results in chronic diarrhea.

disturbed, illness can occur. In one study, researchers found that the digestive linings of healthy individuals contained 30 times the amount of a specific probiotic bacteria when compared with levels found in those who suffered from colitis, an inflammatory colon condition that often results in chronic diarrhea. One major cause for the disruption of our healthy internal bacterial balance is the administration of antibiotics. Some cause more imbalance than others, and the frequency of use is also a factor. There is no question that antibiotics, when utilized properly, are beneficial, even life-saving.

Not only does relying too heavily on antibiotics cause unnecessary and premature bacterial resistance to develop, indiscriminate use can also lead to an uncomfortable side effect, antibioticassociated diarrhea (AAD).

All living organisms must obtain nourishment in order to survive. Bacteria are no exception. Probiotics feed predominately on prebioticsdifferent types of fibers the human that digestive system is only minimally, or not at all, capable of digesting. While the human body is ill suited to digest them, bacteria have enzymes that break prebiotics down and ferment the sugars in them, creating short-chain fatty acids. These fatty acids are used as fuel by the various types of cells that line the intestines. Certain simple sugars, such as tagatose, and sugar alcohols, such as xylitol, maltitol and erythritol, that are not absorbed well by our digestive systems are also used by probiotic

bacteria to effectively fuel their growth.

Much like the adverse effects on probiotic colonies that occur when taking antibiotics, a lowfiber, high-fat and high-sugar diet can greatly reduce the level of probiotics in the gut. Fruits and vegetables contain prebiotic fibers that feed probiotic bacteria, and many varieties of yogurt and other fermented foods contain such bacteria. However, the concentrations of beneficial bacteria in yogurt are not always large enough to provide health benefits, so you should consider taking a supplement. Complex carbohydrates such as beans, nuts and seeds, and other "good" fiber sources also feed healthy flora in the gut.

The concept of purposefully feeding bacteria in our bodies may not seem natural to some. But the helpful bacteria in the gut need food to survive, and if we take care to provide them with that nourishment by eating foods that contain ample prebiotics, we are helping to take care of our bodies.

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children's health

In today's busy society, parents often feel torn between work and home, but spending time with the family is key to creating a strong and happy family life.

FINDING Family Hime

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here's more to family time than simply shuttling the kids from one activity to another or helping them with homework. Of course, these are important responsibilities of parents, but it's just as important to spend quality time getting to really know the members of your family and creating a strong bond with them. A quality family life helps create a feeling of belonging for both parents and children. Supplying a secure and warm emotional environment helps all family members bond together as a team, with each player fulfilling a key role within the family. It helps children in their journey through adolescence to adulthood by instilling a sense of belonging. If he or she is not nurtured "from within," a teen that is seeking acceptance will often search outside the home for the sense of belonging that a strong family can supply. Spending time with your family is the foundation upon which trust is built. It is also a way to pass on family traditions and values. If your family is like most, then you are consistently torn in many directions—juggling schedules, activities and work. In all the daily duties, it is easy to forget about quality family time. At first thought, most parents can't imagine finding time to complete even more than what is already on their to-do list. It's actually not nearly as difficult as it might seem. It just takes a little discipline and creativity. Some pointers include the following:

• Set a Schedule. Buy a calendar that will serve as the "Family Calendar" and schedule family time for the entire month. (You may also want to include any individual activities—such as Tommy's soccer practice on Wednesday or Jenny's ballet lessons on Monday.) Once the schedule is set, hang it in a place where the entire family can see what's on the agenda.

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Ideas for Fun Family Time

Game Night

Games are a great way to unite the family as well as teach them how to be good winners and losers. Try setting aside one night a week for a few hours of family games. Can't decide what game to play? Compromise by taking turns playing each family member's favorite game on a schedule.

Explore Nature

Hiking, biking, fishing, swimming and exploring the great outdoors are activities that always stimulate a child's imagination. Investigate your local hiking trails, swimming holes, and state or national parks.

Help Others

Volunteer your family's time to help those in need. Working together for others is an incredible way to build a family bond.

Backyard Camping

Camping out in the backyard is an excellent way to introduce young children to camping. Throw up the tent, roast marshmallows and tell tall tales over a fire—children of all ages will enjoy this quick retreat.

Visit Others

Take time to visit with members of your extended family. This helps create a sense of family history and strengthens the bond. If your family lives too far away for a day visit, then plan the same type of activity with a close family friend.

Revealing the Mysteries of Male Management of Male Mysteries of Male Market Mar

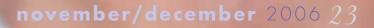
Hot flashes, decreased libido and loss of energy are all well-known symptoms of female menopause. But what many people don't realize is that older men can suffer from the exact same symptoms as they age. Unlike female menopause, andropause—often referred to as male menopause—is just beginning to gain scientific credence in the medical world. Because it is not yet as well recognized as female menopause, it remains a relatively unrecognized condition that many men experience as they age.

Andropause is not all that different from menopause in that both are normal, natural processes the human body goes through as it ages. Just as menopause is characterized by decreasing levels of estrogen, andropause is characterized by decreasing levels of androgens—the so-called male sex hormones—most notably testosterone.

Aside from the fact that it still remains not so well recognized, one reason fewer men are diagnosed and treated for andropause is that they are less likely than women to visit their doctors when feeling less vibrant, especially when dealing with symptoms such as reduction in sexual desire and function.

Many of the symptoms associated with andropause—decreased libido, loss of energy, depression, even erectile dysfunction—are often seen as an embarrassing threat to manhood. This can lead a man to ignore his symptoms rather than seek help. Other symptoms, such as irritability or moodiness, may even go completely unnoticed by a man until his partner points out that he is acting differently.

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fitness

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while listening to music or watching television, that might seem dreadfully boring to someone who craves the social interaction that comes with team sports or activities like dance classes or other forms of aerobic exercise.

Often, people who enjoy the strenuous workout that comes with competitive team games associate

winter with the ending of sports season. But there are plenty of indoor sports than can be taken up when the soccer field is underneath ice and snow. Racquetball, basketball, hockey, volleyball and wrestling are just a few examples of some indoor sports that can be played year round. Many of the sports that are traditionally played outdoors can be played inside. Many clubs and organizations have intramural teams that are often looking for new members of all different skill levels.

For people who like to work out in groups but don't care for competitive sports, indoor group activities such as yoga,

martial arts or dance classes are a good way to exercise while having fun and staying connected with others. Taking a partner to a session of dance classes is an excellent way to bond while getting in shape together. Moreover it is fun, which means your chances of sticking with it are much higher. Balance, stamina and weight control are just a few of the many benefits that can be attained by utilizing dance as a means of exercise.

Peaceful group activities such as yoga and tai chi classes strengthen muscles and improve balance and flexibility in the comfort of a warm and relaxing atmosphere, which can be an inviting holiday from blustering winter weather.

An article in the *Journal of the American Medical* Association stated that even low- and moderateintensity workouts such as walking, when done regularly, are enough to reduce the chances of developing heart disease. Walking, just putting one foot in front of the other, is often enough to help control hypertension and slow the progression of osteoporosis. Walking fast for as little as 20 to 30 minutes has been shown to be a workout that acts as cardiovascular

training.

Perhaps the greatest aspect of walking is that it can be done virtually anywhere, anytime, even in the winter. The mall, the gym, an athletic club, the company cafeteria or just about anywhere will do. For an advanced session, try walking up and down the stairs at work or in your apartment building.

If time constraints, money or the unbearable thought of driving through a snowstorm to get to the gym are keeping you home, it's still possible to get a good workout right where you are. There are many sources of home exercise equipment available,

but you don't necessarily need to shell out big bucks to work out at home. You just need to get creative. DVDs that teach virtually any form of exercise can be rented or bought, and can be done in the comfort and privacy of your own home. Simple things like canned goods can be used as beginner's weights. A few dollars spent on a jump rope can go a long way toward improving health, and chairs are perfect for assisting difficult stretching positions.

Exercise has been shown to have a positive effect on mood, which can be vitally important, especially during the dark, dreary winter months. Finding an exercise activity that you enjoy, combined with a healthy diet, can greatly help ward off those pesky winter pounds and help you feel better, day in and day out.

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Exercise has

children's health

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Be rigid and don't schedule other activities when you have time set aside for the family.

- Devise a Plan. It's never productive to procrastinate when planning family outings. Get the entire family involved in helping to decide where to go and what to do ahead of time so that you can make reservations, get maps, organize your supplies or make whatever preparations are necessary in time. This also lets all family members make their individual plans. Make it a team effort and delegate assignments or tasks.
- Lose the Distractions. Turn off the television, at least for a while; hide the video games; and unplug the Internet connection if necessary! There is nothing that distracts from family time more than these options. Provide your family an opportunity to bond without the background noise and you'll be surprised at how little you miss the television blasting all the time and how much more you have learned about your children.
- Emphasize the Importance. Make spending time with the family a priority. It can be tough at first, and often takes a while to make it a habit, but once established, family time will become irreplaceable for all members of the family.

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Men who traditionally think of themselves as strong and virile can have a difficult time dealing with decreasing libido. It often causes them to withdraw from the problem quietly instead of seeking help, which can lead to depression. However, andropause is far from the end of the world, nor is it as embarrassing a condition as many men might think. Andropause is a natural stage of a man's life, is much more common than many people realize, and it is treatable. In more severe cases, testosterone replacement therapy can relieve many symptoms of andropause, allowing for a normal, healthy life. Even libido can be restored.

Andropause usually sets in much more gradually than the feminine menopause. Starting around age 30, testosterone levels in men begin to decrease by about 10 percent per decade. Typically, the signs of andropause manifest themselves between the ages of 40 and 55. According to the Canadian Society for the Study of the Aging Male, 30 percent of men in their 50s have levels of testosterone low enough to put them at risk for symptoms of andropause. Because testosterone levels continue to decrease as men age, that number increases for men in their 60s and beyond.

Because the symptoms vary so widely from person to person, andropause can easily be overlooked. It can be even more difficult to diagnose because of the time in life that andropause sets in, often being misinterpreted as a "midlife crisis." Unfortunately, changing jobs or buying a new sports car will do nothing to replace the loss of testosterone involved in andropause.

The many factors preventing andropause from being properly diagnosed, combined with a general lack of knowledge available on the subject, make it even more important for men to talk to their doctors about the possibility of needing testosterone replacement therapy as they age. It is important for men to be properly diagnosed; without treatment andropause can lead to much more serious conditions such as heart disease or weakened bones, which can lead to debilitating fractures. Aside from preventing these conditions, treating andropause is a good way to help a man feel better about himself as he ages.

Staying Connected

Getting "old" is too often seen as a lonely and depressing part of life, but it doesn't have to be that way. In fact, it shouldn't be looked at in that way at all. There is plenty to do as you enter those golden years, if you know where to look. Staying socially connected in your community makes your later years more enjoyable and can greatly help you prolong the feeling of independence.

Researchers, scientists of all kinds and our doctors have told us over and over again that an important part of healthy aging is staying active, both physically and mentally. Making a commitment to yourself to stay socially connected will help ensure that you accomplish this. It is worth the effort to keep your connections with family members and friends. Here are a few ideas that will help you stay connected.

Take classes

You are never too old to learn something new, and classrooms are great places to meet people with similar interests. Many people take courses for fun. Some examples include dancing, art, music, cooking, hiking, woodworking, quilting or any interest you have at all. Community colleges and community centers often offer such classes. Not only are these classes a good place to meet people, they also stimulate the brain, helping to keep you feeling young. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that leisure activities such as dancing and playing musical instruments reduce the risk of developing dementia.

Start a regular game night

Offer to host or organize a weekly evening of playing card games, chess, dominos or any game at all. Not only will it be a chance to visit with others, but the mental challenge of games is excellent exercise for the brain—a powerful tool for warding off Alzheimer's and other diseases.

Join a club

There are countless clubs and organizations that provide valuable services to the community. Veteran organizations, lodges, churches, service clubs like the Lion's Club, book clubs, choirs and numerous others offer a chance for like-minded people to get together. It is nice and healthy to visit, have fun and even volunteer in community service projects if you are interested. Finding the right organizations for you will provide an opportunity to stay connected while giving you the satisfying feeling of helping those in need. Maintaining a feeling of belonging is important to us all, regardless of age.

Mentor

There are people of all ages who could benefit from having someone with more life experience to talk with on a regular basis. Find a mentoring program to participate in and volunteer your services. Government and nonprofit groups are two good places to look for such programs. Many churches also have mentoring programs that benefit both young and old alike.

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Be Accountable

Lasting change is difficult to maintain, and becomes even more difficult when you feel alone in your changes. Once you have evaluated your patterns and developed a few small steps towards healthier eating, you will need to introduce these changes to someone who can help you stay on track.

The first place to start is in the home. It is important that the whole family be supportive of any changes, and that they encourage these changes by helping you meet your goals. This may mean keeping different foods in the household, eating at a different time, or even having the whole family participate in a stress-relieving activity. However you need them to

help, your family is your first line of defense and having their support can make a big difference in maintaining your goals.

Many people, though, either live alone or have difficult family situations that do not allow for such support. In that case, it is even more important to find outside accountability. There are many places to access support, such as a friend or coworker also trying to make changes or an area workout center. Most health and diet Web sites provide message boards for support and sharing ideas. Whatever is comfortable for your Recognize the difference between fighting against the changes and allowing yourself a little bit of freedom from following them.

Allow Occasional Lapses

Taking the steps necessary to change your eating style for the better is very important, but it also must be put in perspective. If you are on track and taking the identified steps to improve your eating style, then sometimes denying yourself the occasional lapse does more harm than good. There are two things to consider, though.

First, occasional does not mean frequent and should not be confused with a regular activity. Instead, the "occasional" lapse should be allowed in special circumstances to absolve you of any guilt. This means go ahead and have a piece of cake at your cousin's wedding, or fast food when out with a friend. These kinds of occasional activities are not going to do major harm to your overall health, but denying yourself the opportunity may cause you to become so frustrated at the changes in your life that you give up on them all together. If you stick to your changes 90 percent

of the time, they will transform your body and your health.

Second, be sure that you are actually on track. If you are having a difficult time letting go of old habits, then it is not a good time to expose yourself to them by allowing a lapse. Recognize the difference between fighting against the changes and allowing yourself a little bit of freedom from following them. When in doubt, it is often better to be overly cautious and assume you cannot handle a lapse than to take the chance and end up never getting back to your new and healthier patterns.

situation, it is imperative that someone know your goals so that when you are tempted to slide back into old patterns you have someone to contact for support or even just distraction. Many times, just knowing that support is there will be enough to help you stick to the small, manageable changes you have decided on making.

Everyone has an eating style, and most could use at least a few improvements. You will feel better about yourself, your habits and your health if you take the time to discover what your eating habits are and how they can be improved. Don't forget to be accountable to others and allow a little bit of freedom to lapse back into old patterns for special occasions.

Healthy Joint Support with Lypping Content of the second second

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women's health

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you are familiar with or have at least tried. It is not a good idea to try new fancy dishes that look fabulous in the magazines if you are not familiar with them. That is just asking for stress!

I have always found it helpful to visualize before a major event in my life. You imagine the way you would like to have it unfold and review all of the steps that are required to achieve that goal. Making lists of each task and checking them off as you accomplish each one can keep you on track. A list for each day, a week or so in advance, will also ensure that projects that need to be done early will not be left until the last minute. One of the best ways to avoid stress when planning anything is organization.

During the holidays, we tend to overeat and eat the wrong things. Try to remember to balance your diet with healthful foods if you are going to indulge. Stress can stimulate the hormone cortisol, which raises blood sugar levels. This, added to the extra treats you may be eating, can leave you irritable and tired.

Exercise during stressful times is important for the overall feeling of well-being. It increases the levels of endorphins in the brain and improves circulation. Long walks can boost your energy and clear your mind. Added benefits are the calories that you will burn off.

Use your favorite relaxation techniques along with plenty of good rest. Your body needs some down time during the holiday season. There are so many tasks during this time of year added onto our regular activities that we sometimes get overwhelmed and sleep deprived.

Remember to plan ahead, organize and delegate and you will have the time to really enjoy your holiday. Make your own traditions rather than trying to reenact your childhood memories. You can incorporate some of them into your new ones and make them more suitable for your lifestyle. Having the time to visit with your guests and live in the moment is the best goal for any happy holiday memory.

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Volunteer

Blood-collection drives, after-school programs, hospice services, bake sales, athletic boosters, church programs, museums and many other services and organizations survive on the service of volunteers. Don't think that you must be young to be a volunteer. Depending on the organization you find, they may be in need of anything from envelope stuffers to telephone operators or concession stand workers. All are activities that will help you stay connected and meet new friends. Volunteering at a local elementary school is a great way to stay connected while helping young children grow.

Start a new hobby

Start a new hobby that will lead to interaction. Ham radio, bird watching, fishing, gardening and even building models can all lead to meeting new people and keeping your mind and body active. Asking for help at the local hobby store, experimenting with a ham radio or organizing a birdwatching trip to the park can lead to building relationships within a whole new and different group of people—many of whom will have interests similar to yours.

Establish a routine

Establishing a routine such as having breakfast with friends on a certain day of the week, playing cards on the first Friday of the month or going out to lunch with friends after church will help you stay active. The repetition of a routine gives you, and those who participate, something to look forward to and helps people to stay committed to activities.

Finding your place in the community is important at any stage of life, but as we age it becomes increasingly important because it prolongs independence and fosters healthier lifestyles for everyone. Experiment to find activities you like and stick with them—even if it seems difficult at first. There is something to do, services to perform and groups to join in any community: just look for ones you like and you will find them.

ask the expert

Oils and health, men and calcium, worrying and blood pressure and too old for weight training.

Which oils can I cook with that will still be healthy?

There are several healthy oils to choose from for cooking in the kitchen, each with its own unique flavor. The most common is extra virgin olive oil—a well-rounded, versatile oil and a good place to start when switching from unhealthy oils. Be careful not to overheat it. If you are comfortable experimenting in the kitchen, there are plenty of other delicious choices. Sunflower and grape seed oils have relatively high smoking points, making them ideal for sautéing and stir-frying. Flax, walnut and pumpkin oils all contain omega-3 fatty acids, which help regulate cholesterol, but they oxidize easily when heated and so should be used only with lower-temperature cooking such as sautéing.

When purchasing cooking oil, it is important to read the label to note the method of extraction and whether the oil is refined or unrefined. Whenever possible, choose expeller-pressed, unrefined oils. Select oils in light-resistant plastic containers, or dark brown or green glass containers.

Should men take calcium supplements too?

Calcium is as important for men as it is for women. If the body (male or female) is not supplied with enough calcium to function, it will steal calcium from bones, making them brittle and increasing chances of a fracture. While the majority of people affected by osteoporosis are women, men are susceptible too. In general, men tend to lose bone density more slowly than women, but after the age of 65 the rate of decline is the same for both sexes, making calcium supplements more and more important for men, just like women, as they grow older.

Can worrying increase my already high blood pressure?

Anxiety, worry and stress can all increase blood pressure temporarily. While stress has been shown to not cause long-term rises in blood pressure, it can cause significant temporary spikes in blood pressure. These frequent jumps can be almost as damaging as chronic high blood pressure. If you find yourself in frequent on-and-off stressful situations, it would be a good idea to learn and practice stress-reduction exercises such as meditation, biofeedback or physical exercise.

I want to start weight training, but I'm afraid I'm too old. Is that possible? You're never too old to start weight training. In fact, you're never too old to start any physical fitness program, so long as you are sufficiently fit and capable. Many doctors or physical therapists can help you find a strength training program that is right for you. It's also a good idea to find a trainer who specializes in working with older adults. Remember, you are only as old as you think you are.

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