

## Help PREVENT Medical Errors

Thousands of Americans die each year as a result of medical errors. Common errors include medication mix-ups, unnecessary blood transfusions, health care facility-contracted infections, patients not reporting side effects, symptoms and complications, and inadequate patient preparation before and after surgery.

**Errors most often occur** in hospital patients' rooms, operating rooms, emergency units, delivery rooms, primary providers' offices and intensive care units.

**The single best way you can help prevent errors** is to stay closely involved in every decision of your medical care, every step of the way. For example:

- » **Keep your health care officially coordinated** by a single practitioner.
- » **When picking up a prescription**, always ask the pharmacist: *Is this what my health care provider prescribed?*
- » **Before surgery**, make sure that you, your provider and your surgeon all agree on exactly what will be done.
- » **During a hospital stay**, ask your medical team what medicines you will be taking, how much, how often and why; that way you can match these instructions against those of the hospital staff that administers your drugs.
- » **Don't assume everyone knows everything you need**, and don't hesitate to speak up. If you're unwell when you meet with your providers, enlist someone who can advocate for you at appointments or during hospital stays.

**The way to minimize medical errors is for everyone involved in health care** — care providers, hospital administrations, governments, health plan providers and patients — to stay aware and commit to a safer system at all levels.



## Overview: The Omegas By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

**Dietary fat is an essential part of our diet.** But, some types of fat are better for you than others. Here's what you need to know about the omega fatty acids.

**We need omega-3 fats for our bodies to function properly.** We have to get omega-3s from food, since our bodies can't make them.

➔ Continued on page 4.

## Safety Corner: Keep on Truckin'

**Take precautions to drive safely around big trucks.**

Whether you drive company vehicles or commute in your own car, learn how to safely share the road with



18-wheelers. You need to take extra precautions over and above regular safe driving techniques.

The insurance provider Esurance recommends the following 4 best practices:

- 1 Take no chances, even when it's inconvenient.** When a truck is about to move into your lane, you might be tempted to speed up and cut the vehicle off so you won't get stuck behind it. Don't do it.
- 2 Pass with care.** Give a truck even more space than you would give other vehicles. Make sure the front of the rig is visible in your rearview mirror before returning to the truck's lane.
- 3 Watch out for turns.** Assume that the truck driver does not see you. Drivers may need to swing wide to the left in order to make a right turn. So trying to squeeze directly behind or beside them could cause a collision. Wait to see where a truck intends to turn before making a move.
- 4 Remember how huge they are.** Because of their weight, big trucks take longer, sometimes twice as long, to stop compared to other vehicles. Drivers can run into trouble if they forget that trucks cannot stop on a dime.

## EXPERT advice

### Q: What is binge drinking?

**A: When a pattern of drinking causes a person's blood alcohol level to exceed .08%.**

**it's considered binge drinking,** according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.



This level typically represents at least 5 drinks for men — or at least 4 drinks for women — consumed in about 2 hours. Keep in mind that the government recommends no more than 2 drinks a day for men and 1 for women.

### Why is binge drinking a concern?

It poses numerous health risks, including alcohol poisoning, alcohol dependence (alcoholism), accidents, vehicle crashes, injuries, suicide, violence, unintended pregnancy, liver disease, heart disease and higher rates of other risky behaviors. Teens who binge are more likely to binge and have other drinking problems as adults.

### How can you stop binge drinking?

Follow these guidelines:

- ❖ Before you start, decide the maximum amount you plan to drink. If you've been unsuccessful sticking to such limits in the past, consider abstaining from alcohol.
- ❖ Socialize with people who don't drink at all or don't drink excessively, and avoid situations that are primarily alcohol-oriented (e.g., beer festivals).
- ❖ Sip your drinks slowly and avoid drinks that go down quickly, such as shots.
- ❖ Eat food along with your drinks. Alternate water or seltzer with your alcoholic drinks.

**For help controlling your drinking,** find a professional counselor who specializes in addictions.

— Eric Endlich, PhD

## CANCER UPDATE: Facts and Figures

By Diane McReynolds, Founder, Personal Best Healthlines

The overall cancer death rate in the U.S. is **declining**, and the number of cancer survivors is increasing, according to the American Cancer Society's 2016 cancer report. A major reason for the decline is **early detection**, particularly for prostate, breast and cervical cancers. Recent statistics:

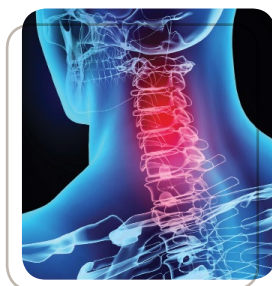
- ✓ **Death rates in the U.S. for the 4 most common cancers** — prostate, lung, colorectal and breast — and all cancers combined have been gradually declining (since 1998). Death rates are also declining for brain, leukemia, ovary, stomach and bladder cancers.
- ✓ **Worldwide, cancer cases rose 33% in the past 10 years**, with prostate cancer being the most common type of cancer in men and breast cancer the most common cancer among women.



- ✓ **The No. 1 cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. is lung cancer**, in both men and women, primarily due to smoking.
- ✓ **Excess body fat is connected to 11 cancers** and considered the **second leading risk factor for cancer** after smoking.
- ✓ **Alcohol consumption likely causes several forms of cancer**, including those of the larynx, esophagus, liver, colon, rectum and female breast.

**Cancer treatment is most successful when the disease is found early.** Discuss cancer screening with your health care provider.

**Scientists hope their immunotherapy research** will eventually lead to a universal cancer vaccine. Meanwhile, a substantial number of cancers could be prevented by not using tobacco, limiting alcohol use and maintaining a healthy weight.



## Save Your Neck

**Supporting your head is a nonstop job for your neck, and subjects it to frequent strain and pain over the course of your life.** Most neck pain is due to mechanical disorders, including pinched nerves caused by herniated vertebral discs, a narrowing of the spinal cord (stenosis), osteoarthritis and whiplash-related injuries to the neck's soft tissue.

**However, you're more likely to develop neck pain from static activities**, such as driving or sitting in front of a computer screen for prolonged periods. Acute strain also may occur after sleeping in an awkward position.

### To help support your neck and prevent or reduce pain:

- » Pay attention to your body to identify strain and stiffness.
- » Practice good posture; keep your back straight and neck upright.
- » When you must sit for hours without getting up (e.g., while driving), ease the strain by stretching your back and shoulders and gently moving your neck forward and back, and left and right.
- » Sleep on your back with good support from your pillow.
- » Avoid hunching over your smartphone or tablet for hours.
- » See your health care provider if your neck pain becomes chronic.
- » Ask your provider about exercise you can tolerate when your neck hurts.

## Practice Critical Thinking

Think about the last time you made a decision or took an action at work, only to realize later that it needed more careful thought. To avoid this misstep, learn **critical thinking**. It's a thought process that leads to fewer errors, wiser decisions and more efficient work and communication.

To tune up your critical thinking skills:

- **Be alert to new ideas** and methods instead of sticking with what is familiar.
- **Raise your comprehension by staying focused.** Listen and read carefully, take notes and think about what you're hearing or seeing.
- **Use curiosity to help solve problems** and gain new information.
- **Collaborate with others** to get fresh ideas and inspire new ways of thinking.

**Will these steps slow down your workflow?** With practice, they can do the opposite. When you think through what you are doing instead of acting blindly, you can be more creative, solve problems more successfully and collaborate better. That adds up to improved learning and getting more done.

## TIP of the MONTH

### Fish Story

All varieties of fish and seafood have some **omega-3 fats**. The richest sources of this important fat are salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, sardines and tuna. When buying canned tuna, look for **light yellowfin** or **skipjack** instead of albacore. These varieties still contain beneficial omega-3 fats, but often less harmful mercury.



## Ancient Grains for Modern Tables

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



September is Whole Grains Month.



**Farro, millet, quinoa and sorghum are all *ancient grains***, which is the name for cereal crops that have been largely unchanged in the past several hundred years. Here's a variety of nutritious ancient grains to add to your plate.

**FARRO:** This grain is popular in Italy and is related to wheat. It comes in 3 varieties: **farro piccolo** (einkorn), **farro medio** (emmer) and **farro grande** (spelt). Whole-grain farro berries are high in fiber and are great in soup, risotto and salad. They cook faster if you soak them overnight. You can also try farro pasta.



**MILLET:** This tropical, yellow-hued grain is a small seed. It cooks to a grainy or creamy consistency, depending on cooking time and how much liquid is added. Enjoy as a morning porridge with cinnamon and raisins, or as part of a pilaf mixed with quinoa. Millet is gluten-free and high in magnesium.

**QUINOA:** This Peruvian native is also a seed rather than a true grain. Quinoa cooks quickly (15 minutes), is a complete protein and is high in iron and B-vitamins. It's also gluten-free. It comes in tan, black and red varieties.

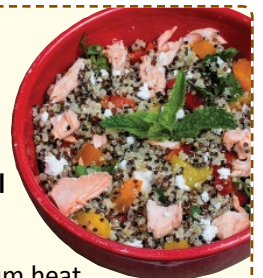


**SORGHUM:** This gluten-free grain is popular in Africa and is the 5th most important cereal crop globally. The small circular orbs are about the size of peppercorns and hold their shape well when cooked. The nutty flavor makes sorghum perfect for savory side dishes. **Bonus:** Sorghum pops like popcorn when heated with oil.

## GRILLED SALMON AND QUINOA SALAD

easy | RECIPE  
From Personal Best®

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 cup <b>quinoa</b> , rinsed                   | Pinch <b>pepper</b>  |
| 4 <b>salmon fillets</b> (2.5 oz. each)         | 2 medium <b>carrots</b> , shredded   |
| 3 tbsp <b>extra-virgin olive oil</b> , divided | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup mixed chopped <b>herbs</b> , such as <b>basil</b> , <b>parsley</b> and <b>dill</b> |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp <b>salt</b>                  | 1 <b>lemon</b> , juice and zest  |



**1. Add** quinoa and 2 cups water to a saucepan set over medium heat. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer until water is absorbed, about 15 minutes. **2. Fluff** and transfer to large serving bowl; set aside. **3. Meanwhile**, brush salmon fillets with 1 tbsp olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. **4. Grill** on medium for 10 minutes for each inch of thickness. **5. Set** aside and break into bite-sized pieces. **6. Add** carrots, herbs, lemon and remaining 2 tbsp olive oil to the quinoa. **7. Add** salt and pepper to taste, and stir to combine. **8. Top** with grilled salmon pieces and serve.

**Makes 6 servings. Per serving:**

406 calories | 21g protein | 21g total fat | 4g saturated fat | 10g mono fat | 7g poly fat  
33g carbohydrate | 2g sugar | 4g fiber | 359mg sodium

## Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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## Expert Advice

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

### Q: Prostate cancer risks?

**A:** Cancer of the prostate is the most common cancer in U.S. men, and the 3rd leading cause of cancer deaths. It occurs in the walnut-shaped prostate gland beneath the bladder in men. Older age ranks as the No. 1 risk factor; all men older than 50 are at increased risk for developing prostate cancer. A family history of prostate or breast cancer also elevates the risk.

**Several other factors may contribute to prostate cancer.** For unknown reasons, the cancer starts earlier and occurs more frequently in African-American men. Research also has linked a diet high in fat and low in vegetables to prostate cancer and excess weight to more aggressive disease.

**Best ways to reduce risk:** Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, lose excess weight and get moderate exercise most days of the week. Talk to your health care provider about screening for prostate cancer.

## Benefits News & Notes

### › Open Enrollment is in October!

Make your 2018 benefit choices Monday, October 2 through Friday, October 27, 2017. Watch out for more details.

### › Plan Now for Tax Savings in 2018

Review your 2017 out-of-pocket expenses to start estimating your 2018 out-of-pocket costs. Include doctor's office copays, deductibles, prescription drug and other coinsurance, and any out-of-pocket dental and vision expenses. The maximum contribution for the health care FSA will increase from \$2,550 to \$2,600 in 2018. (Up to \$500 from 2017 can carry over into 2018, as long as it results in a health care FSA account with minimum of \$120.)

## OFF TO SCHOOL

By Wellspring Family Services (EAP Provider).

### Tips for getting there safely:

#### FOR BUS RIDERS:

- Line up facing the school bus door, not along the side of the school bus.
- Don't play in the street while waiting for the bus.
- Never reach under a bus to get anything that has rolled or fallen underneath.
- Get out of traffic and onto the sidewalk as soon as you get off the bus.
- Wait for a signal from the bus driver before you cross the street.
- Walk at least 10 steps in front of the bus so the driver can see you, and never cross the street behind the bus.

#### FOR WALKERS:

- Always walk with a friend.
- Wear brightly colored clothes by day, and reflective clothing in dark conditions.
- Use crosswalks. Look carefully in all directions, and never cross in the middle of a block.
- Know the meaning of red and green lights and traffic signs.
- Walk on the same side of the street as oncoming traffic.
- Don't wear headphones. You may not be able to hear traffic or bicyclists.
- Avoid standing or walking between parked cars.
- Never run into the street.
- Be on the lookout for blind curves.
- Remember that bus and big truck drivers cannot see you if you're too close to the front of their vehicle (10 feet or less).

## Overview: The Omegas

➡ Continued from page 1.

**There are 3 main types of omega-3 fats:** **DHA** and **EPA** are in fish such as salmon and trout (eat 2 to 3 times a week), and **ALA** is in plant-based sources such as walnuts, flax and canola. Because there are limited sources for omega-3, many people do not get enough in their diet.

**Adequate omega-3 intake is associated with less inflammation.** Lowering inflammation is important if you have an inflammatory condition such as Crohn's, colitis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout or psoriasis. Chronic inflammation is also linked to an increased risk of cancer.

**Omega-6 fats are also essential for good health.** However, they're in many foods, so North Americans don't tend to be short on omega-6s. Food sources include all vegetable oils (grapeseed, sunflower, corn, soybean, etc.), nuts, seeds, salad dressings, dairy, meat, whole grains and any foods made with oil.

**Omega-9 fats are neutral or beneficial for health.** They are monounsaturated fats and are plentiful in olive, canola and avocado oils.

**The single most important thing you can do to improve your omega-fat ratio is to switch your oils.** Instead of omega-6-rich sunflower, corn and soybean oils, switch to olive, canola and avocado oils, which are higher in omega-9 fats – and use omega-3-rich flaxseed oil for salads.

