

November is American Diabetes Month.



PREDIABETES: Should You Be Tested?

Borderline diabetes is called prediabetes. It's present when blood sugar levels are moderately high, indicating a risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

Untreated, type 2 diabetes and persistent high blood sugar can cause crippling health problems, including kidney damage, nerve damage and arterial blockages, resulting in strokes, heart attacks, blindness and amputations.

Risk factors for prediabetes include:

- ➔ A family history of diabetes.
- ➔ Overweight or obese.
- ➔ Not exercising.
- ➔ Asian-, Native-, African-American or Latino ethnicity.
- ➔ Having diabetes during pregnancy.
- ➔ Smoking (smokers are 30% to 40% more likely to develop diabetes than nonsmokers).

Ask your health care provider about testing if you're age 45 or older or have any of the risk factors noted above. Prediabetes can be targeted and prevented by addressing those reversible lifestyle factors affecting your health, and sometimes with medication.

Two steps to dropping your prediabetes risk by half:

- 1 Lose 5% of your body weight (e.g., 10 pounds if you weigh 200).
- 2 Exercise moderately (such as brisk walking) 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

Even if you can't get to your ideal weight, losing just 10 to 15 pounds can improve your body's use of insulin — the key to healthy blood sugar.



“Your positive **action** combined with positive **thinking** results in **success**. — Shiv Khera

Safety Corner Tips for using portable generators safely

Generators and their hazards

During a power outage, portable generators are a convenient way to keep essential functions of your home or work facility running. However, generators can be very dangerous if you don't know how to use and work around them safely.

Where should you use a generator?

Never use a generator inside, and never use it in an enclosed space, such as a garage or basement. Using generators indoors can cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure the generator has at least 3 to 4 feet of clear space on all sides. Don't place the generator next to a door, window, or vent where carbon monoxide could find its way inside a building.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include dizziness, headaches, nausea, and tiredness. You can't see or smell carbon monoxide. If you or a coworker experiences these symptoms while using a generator, turn off the generator, get fresh air, and seek medical attention.

Electrical hazards

Never connect a generator directly to the electrical system of a building unless a qualified electrician has installed a transfer switch. Attaching the generator to the building's electrical system can feed power back into the grid, which creates an electrocution risk for utility workers. Instead, use extension cords to plug appliances into the generator directly.

Make sure the cords you use with a generator are 3-prong (grounded) and are rated for the equipment they will be powering. They should also be rated for outdoor use. Inspect extension cords before using them to make sure they aren't damaged. >>Continued on page 5.

Opioids: How to Use (and Stop Using) Them Safely

During the 1990s, synthetic opioids became a standard treatment for severe or chronic pain.

However, with growing widespread use, many patients experienced withdrawal problems when they tried to stop using the drugs; increasing cases of addiction, overdose and death have led to our current national epidemic. While opioids may still be used when medically necessary, caution is needed.

Patients with chronic pain and their providers should explore non-opiate pain treatment options, including oral medications, physical therapy, topical medications, acupuncture and nerve blocks. If opioids are needed — to relieve cancer pain or extreme back pain due to injury, for example — doses can often be reduced safely by using the drugs along with other non-medication treatments.

Ask your provider about safe use of prescribed opioids for the shortest time possible. If you have been using opioids long-term, don't try to stop without medical help. Withdrawal symptoms, including extreme anxiety, body-wide pain, gastrointestinal distress and insomnia, can be serious.

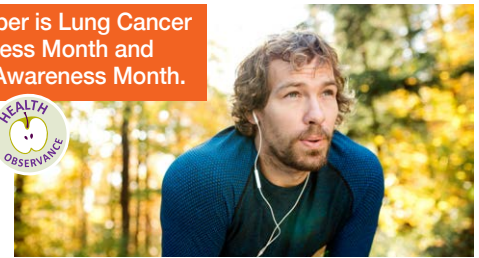
The FDA has approved several medications that can successfully treat withdrawal symptoms:

- **Lofexidine** reduces the severity of opioid withdrawal.
- **Buprenorphine** binds to opioid receptors, reducing withdrawal symptoms.
- **Methadone** stops drug cravings by blocking opioid receptors.
- **Naltrexone** blocks opioid receptors in the brain, stopping the drug's euphoria.

Get medical supervision to stop opioid use with a plan based on your individual health condition and circumstances. Referral to a therapist who specializes in opioid withdrawal and a support group can help you safely quit opioids.

Breathe Easy

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month and COPD Awareness Month.



Take time to focus on your lungs. Just like your heart, joints and other parts of your body, your lungs age. They can become less flexible and lose strength, making breathing more difficult — especially if you develop lung disease.

5 ways to keep your lungs working well:

- 1. Prevent infection.** Avoid exposure to cold and flu germs, which can cause serious respiratory infection. Get vaccinated annually against the flu; ask your health care provider if you also need a pneumonia vaccination.
- 2. Exercise aerobically.** Nonstop workouts that moderately raise your heart rate (e.g., swimming, biking, brisk walking) can significantly aid your lung capacity.

COPD symptoms include: increasing breathlessness due to emphysema, chronic bronchitis or persistent asthma attacks. Early screening can identify COPD before major loss of lung function occurs.

Lung cancer symptoms to watch for: chronic coughing and shortness of breath; repeated pneumonia or bronchitis; coughing up blood; pain in the chest, neck, shoulder and upper back. For help quitting smoking go to lung.org/stop-smoking/.

3. Breathe deeply. Most of the time we take shallow breaths. Deep breathing clears the lungs and provides a fuller oxygen exchange. As often as possible: Slowly breathe in (count 1 to 4) through your nose. Then exhale very slowly.

4. Get regular health care. During checkups, your provider can listen to your breathing and identify potential problems.

5. Quit smoking. Cigarette smoking destroys lung tissue, putting you at serious risk for lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Exercise Fables

Understanding the effects and benefits of exercise can be complicated.

Accordingly, there's no shortage of misinformation about it, especially with countless resources to advise us. Here are some common misconceptions revealed by ACE Fitness.

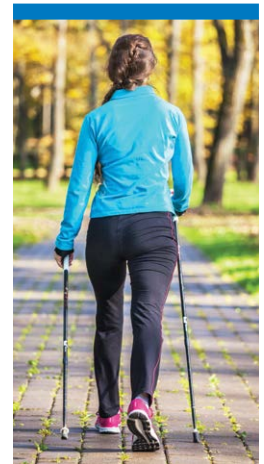
When strength training stops, muscle turns to fat. Reality: When you stop weight workouts and become sedentary, your body's lean tissue will atrophy or weaken and reduce in size. But muscle will not and cannot turn into fat.

Cardio training is more important than strength training. Reality: They're equally important. Both improve physical and mental stamina and control weight. Maintaining aerobic and muscular fitness can each help prevent or manage chronic ailments, including heart risk factors, diabetes, obesity, arthritis, osteoporosis and depression.

Lots of sit-ups will give you a flat belly. Reality:

Sit-ups help to tone and firm the abdominal muscles, but they won't burn the layer of fat on top of those muscles. That requires burning calories with proper diet and regular exercise to produce overall weight loss and a slimmer body, including your waistline.

Walking isn't exercise. Reality: Walking regularly boosts your overall health. Walk at least 150 minutes weekly. Walking aids joint health, improves cholesterol and blood pressure levels and protects against obesity, diabetes, depression and dementia.



Tips to Prevent Burnout

By Eric Endlich, PhD



When stress continues for too long, you can experience the physical or emotional exhaustion known as burnout. However, you may not always recognize the signs of **burnout**, which include:

- Feeling overwhelmed.
- Trying to escape by neglecting tasks or by excessive drinking.
- Lacking joy or interest in your work or home life.
- Having frequent insomnia or heart palpitations.
- Feeling hopeless or depressed.

Several strategies can help prevent or reverse burnout. First, take note of your primary sources of stress. If you are unsure, keep a diary of daily events and your reactions. Identify the things that truly matter to you — this can help you pinpoint what’s missing.

Good self-care is also essential. Take breaks rather than working through lunches. Get enough sleep, exercise and downtime. Learn to say “no” calmly and delegate appropriately. Skipping vacations or working too much overtime can take a toll on your health.

Look to trusted friends, health care professionals or clergy who will listen supportively and help you think creatively about ways to reduce the stress in your life. Remember to notice the positives in your life and the world around you every day.

TIP of the MONTH

Having a Party?

If you’re entertaining this holiday season, remember food safety.



Protein-rich food should not be kept at room temperature for longer than 3 hours. If you set out a shrimp ring, chicken skewers or cheese platter before dinner, don’t wait until after the meal to put them back in the refrigerator. You’ll prevent spoilage and cut back on food waste. — Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Holiday Dinner Tips

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Sharing meals with friends and family is a special part of the festive holiday season. Here are 5 ways to minimize kitchen time, as you maximize people time.

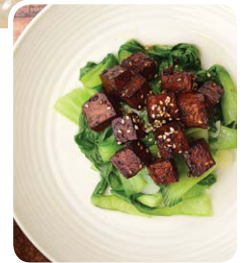


1 Don’t do all of the work yourself. Invite guests to bring a dish and share the work. Even if they don’t cook, guests can help by creating a fruit platter, bringing beverages or buying dessert.



2 Forget about fancy. Trying chicken cordon bleu for the first time when you have 20 guests coming is not a good idea. Make your tried-and-true, well-loved recipes that you can pull off with ease. And make as much as you can in advance.

4 Know about likes and dislikes before you plan your menu. Vegetarian guests? Any food allergies or intolerances? When you invite guests, ask about preferences.



Note: The recipe below is great for vegetarian dinner guests.

3 Prepare salad before and refrigerate it. For a lettuce-based salad, add dressing just before serving. For a grain-based salad (e.g., pasta or quinoa), dress it in advance so the flavors have a chance to blend.



5 If you have a dish that must be cooked and served immediately, measure and prep all of your ingredients in advance. Guests can linger in the kitchen while you cook that last dish.



GINGER TOFU AND GREENS

easy | RECIPE
From Personal Best®

- 1 block (12 oz.) extra-firm **tofu**
- 2 tbsp **olive oil**
- 1 tbsp **miso (fermented soy) paste**
- ½ cup **water**
- 2 cloves **garlic**, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh **ginger**, minced
- 6 cups **baby bok choy**, halved
- 2 cups **broccoli florets**
- 1 tbsp **sesame seeds**

Cut tofu into 1-inch cubes. **Heat** oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. **Layer** tofu evenly in the pot and allow to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. **Flip** tofu and brown the other side, about 5 minutes. **Meanwhile**, whisk miso and water together. **Once** tofu has browned, stir in miso-water mixture, garlic and ginger. **Simmer** 1 minute. **Add** bok choy and broccoli. **Cover** with lid and steam about 5 to 6 minutes, stirring a few times, until vegetables are tender-crisp. **Serve** on a platter, sprinkled with sesame seeds.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving:

171 calories | 12g protein | 11g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 6g mono fat
4g poly fat | 10g carbohydrate | 1g sugar | 3g fiber | 227mg sodium

Caregiver Stress By Wellspring Family Services (EAP Provider)

Most Americans will be informal caregivers at some point during their lives. While it can be rewarding, it can also be challenging. Some caregivers may feel overwhelmed by the amount of care their aging, sick or disabled family member needs.

Caregiver stress can take many forms. For instance, you may feel frustrated and angry one minute and helpless the next. You may make mistakes when giving medicines or you may turn to unhealthy behaviors like smoking or drinking too much alcohol. Other signs and symptoms of caregiver stress include:

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling alone, isolated, or deserted by others
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Gaining or losing a lot of weight
- Feeling tired most of the time
- Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Becoming easily irritated or angered
- Feeling worried or sad often
- Having headaches or body aches often



For support, information and ideas on how to manage and prevent caregiver stress, call Wellspring EAP at 1-800-553-7798, or go online to www.wellspringeap.org to explore the eldercare tools and resources available to you.

Source: Adapted from Caregiver Stress, WomensHealth.gov; retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/caregiver-stress>, on January 12, 2018.

EAP Resources for Victims on Harassment and Assault

Over the past few weeks many people around the country have been impacted by the details of harassment and assault. During these challenging times, we want to remind employees of our [Wellspring Employee Assistance Program](#). This benefit affords you and your family members in the moment support with a trained counselor, as well as a referral for up to six sessions with licensed professional care. Voluntary contact with Wellspring EAP is kept in confidence; SHA is not provided with specific names or identifying information about employees who call for services. If you or your family members are experiencing concerns or impacts, please feel free to reach out to EAP for support. SHA staff may call 800-553-7798 to make arrangements to speak with a counselor or request other resources that may be helpful.

Medicare, Explained By Kirk Larson, Social Security Washington Public Affairs Specialist

Social Security and Medicare have a few things in common.

Both programs help safeguard millions of Americans as well as improve the quality of life for our family and friends. Although both programs are household names, many people may not be familiar with the details of Medicare.

Medicare is our country's health insurance program for people age 65 or older. The program helps with the cost of health care, but it doesn't cover all medical expenses or the cost of most long-term care. You have choices for how you get Medicare coverage. If you choose to have original Medicare coverage, you can buy a Medicare supplement policy (called Medigap) from a private insurance company to cover some of the costs that Medicare does not.

Medicare has four parts:

- **Medicare Part A (hospital insurance)** helps pay for inpatient care in a hospital or skilled nursing facility (following a hospital stay). Part A also pays for some home health care and hospice care.
- **Medicare Part B (medical insurance)** helps pay for services from doctors and other health care providers, outpatient care, home health care, durable medical equipment, and some preventive services.

- **Medicare Part C (Medicare Advantage)** includes all benefits and services covered under Part A and Part B. Some plans include Medicare prescription drug coverage (Medicare Part D) and other extra benefits and services.

- **Medicare Part D (Medicare prescription drug coverage)** helps cover the cost of prescription drugs. Some people with limited resources and income may also be able to get Extra Help with the costs—monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription co-payments—related to a Medicare prescription drug plan. The Extra Help is estimated to be worth about \$4,900 per year. You must meet the resources and income requirement.

Medicare's different parts are further explained in our publication at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10043.pdf.

If you can't afford to pay your Medicare premiums and other medical costs, you may be able to get help from your state. States offer programs for people eligible for or entitled to Medicare who have low income. Some programs may pay for Medicare premiums and some pay Medicare deductibles and coinsurance. To qualify, you must have Medicare Part A and have limited income and resources.

You can learn more about Medicare, including how to apply for Medicare and get a replacement Medicare card, at www.socialsecurity.gov/benefits/medicare.

News & Notes

Update Your Address – year-end is fast approaching. It is important that Human Resources has your current mailing address so you will receive important tax documents and benefits information on time. Please email Colin Grant (Colin.Grant@seattlehousing.org) to update your current address.

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Safety Corner >>Continued from page 1.

Fire hazards

To prevent fires, when you refuel the generator, always shut it down and allow it to cool before adding fuel. Store generator fuels in approved containers, and keep containers away from fire hazards and hot devices. Store generator fuels away from areas where people routinely work.

Tips to remember

Don't overload a generator—in other words, don't try to use it to power more than it is rated for. Don't use a generator in the rain or in wet conditions, and do not use electrical equipment that has been submerged in water.

Do always use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) with a portable generator. GFCIs shut off current when they detect an electrical fault



Smart Moves Toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/18V11tools.

EXPERT advice — Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP



Q: No safe level of smoking?

A: Many smokers have switched to low-intensity or intermittent smoking

— also called light smoking. They may limit their smoking to a few cigarettes each day, or only smoke now and then — such as on certain days of the week, or in specific situations.

But experts say there is no safe level of smoking, and light smoking still presents serious health risks. Studies have shown:

Smoking — even 1 cigarette a day — increases your risk for heart disease; cancers of the head, neck, lung and digestive tract; infertility, poor healing, respiratory infections and cataracts; and early death.

Even if you average less than 1 cigarette a day, you have a 2-fold higher risk of cardiovascular disease and a 64% increase in premature deaths compared to those who have never smoked.

People who smoke up to 10 cigarettes a day increase their rate of early death by 87%. And, 1 to 4 cigarettes a day is almost as risky as a pack per day.

Nonsmokers who regularly breathe secondhand smoke have a 30% boost in heart disease risk and a 30% higher rate of lung cancer.

Light smokers can significantly reduce their health risks when they quit completely. Talk to your health care provider about the most effective and safe options for you. Nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, nose sprays or inhalers can help, as well as medications such as bupropion or varenicline. Other approaches include support groups, cognitive behavioral therapy or hypnosis.

TAKEAWAY: Even low-level smoking can raise your risk for heart disease, cancer and early death. Loved ones and pets also have increased health risks from exposure to smoke.

November 15
is the Great
American Smokout

Do You Need That EKG?

An electrocardiogram (EKG) is a painless test that uses sensors placed on the skin over your chest. It can detect how long an electrical wave moves from one part of your heart to another, and whether the speed is normal, slow, too fast or irregular.



An EKG can help diagnose heart attacks and other cardiac problems. The test isn't always diagnostic by itself and can't be used to reliably predict your future heart health.

Do you need an EKG if you have an intermediate or high risk for heart disease but have no symptoms and haven't been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease? The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force states we can't know if the benefits of a screening EKG outweigh potential harms. Keep in mind that abnormal EKG findings sometimes lead to unnecessary invasive procedures and treatments.

Bottom line: Discuss whether you need an EKG with your health care provider. Base your decision on your individual risk factors for heart disease: older age, male gender, smoking, high blood pressure, being overweight or obese, diabetes, high cholesterol and a personal or family history of heart disease.

Distracted Driving

SAFETY corner



Washington State recently enacted a tough law against Driving While Under the Influence of Electronics (E-DUI). Under this law drivers cannot hold any electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) while driving or stopped in traffic — even at a stoplight. Other states may follow with similar laws to crack down on drivers who use electronic devices while behind the wheel.

Check your state's laws and states where you are traveling.

Best bet: Stay alert. Keep your eyes on the road at all times.