

## Inside This Issue:

Self-Care Corner .....	2
Medical News.....	3
Feed Your Body – Feed Your Soul.....	4
Well-Being Tip.....	6
Financial Health .....	7



Health  
Dimensions®

Sponsored by:

San Diego County  
Credit Union®  
sdccu.com

# HealthyLife® Letter

Promoting Health. Enhancing Life. Reducing Costs.

April 2018

## Learn to love exercise

We know exercise improves our health and well-being. So why do so many of us struggle to get and stay active?

Maybe we need to look at exercise in a different way. Look at it as something you want to do for yourself and not as a chore or something you have to do.

You can look forward to exercise, and even learn to love it, with these tips:

- **Think about who you are.** If you are social, look into group classes and activities. “Home bodies” might enjoy using exercise DVDs or online programs in their living room. If you enjoy nature, use your neighborhood or local walking paths to get fresh air. Sports fans might like to join a softball or soccer team.

- **Branch out.** Take a chance on a new activity such as dance classes, rock climbing or water aerobics. You may discover a new way to get exercise that is fun and exciting for you.
- **Be a kid again.** If you loved basketball, skating or swimming as a child, who says you can’t do it now? Look for local adult clubs or gatherings that include your favorite childhood activities.

- **Add variety.** Being bored with exercise will lower your motivation. Change things up, such as walking two days a week and an aerobics or swimming class on the weekend.

- **Find your rhythm.** Your favorite music can help you enjoy a walk, jog or weight lifting session. Load your favorite upbeat songs on a music player or smartphone and take it along for your workout. Be careful not to turn it up too loud. You still need to hear what is going on around you. And, prolonged use of headphones at high volumes can cause hearing loss.



Source: National Institutes of Health

# Calming an irritable bowel



Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a disorder of the digestive system. Experts believe that IBS happens when there is a problem with how the brain and the gut work together. IBS can have bothersome symptoms like stomach pain, diarrhea and constipation. But, IBS does not damage the digestive tract like the effects of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease.

Millions of people in the U.S. have IBS. And some people have severe symptoms that require medication or other medical care. IBS should be diagnosed by a doctor to ensure your symptoms are not caused by other diseases.

Fortunately, mild to moderate symptoms of IBS can often be improved with some self-care and lifestyle changes.

## Foods to skip

Some foods are known to cause more cramping and diarrhea. People with IBS may wish to avoid these foods, which include:

- Fried foods or high-fat meals
- Artificial sweeteners
- Caffeine, such as coffee or tea
- Alcohol

You should also avoid eating large meals.

## Keep a food diary

It may be a good idea to keep a food diary to identify other problem foods and eating habits, especially during flare-ups.



## Feel fiber-fabulous

Fiber is one of the most effective ways to help calm an irritable bowel. Fiber can improve constipation because it softens stool and makes it easier to pass. And, it may help “bulk up” stool to reduce diarrhea.

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans says that adults should be eating 22 to 34 grams of fiber per day. Soluble fiber may be the best choice for those with IBS.

## Good sources of soluble fiber include:



Oats



Nuts



Lentils



Beans



Fruits & Vegetables

If you're not used to eating fiber, don't eat too much at first. This could lead to gas, bloating, and more IBS symptoms. Gradually increase the amount of fiber you eat by 2 to 3 grams per day until you're eating the recommended amount. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids to absorb the extra fiber.

## Get better sleep

Sleep helps the body restore itself, and poor sleep may aggravate IBS symptoms. Help your body rest by practicing good sleep hygiene. You can do this by:

- Shutting off computers, smart phones and other screens two hours before bedtime
- Going to bed and getting up at the same time every day
- Avoiding alcohol and heavy meals in the evening
- Not smoking
- Getting regular exercise (even light exercise can help you sleep better)
- Avoiding naps if you have trouble sleeping at night

## Get help from your doctor

If these self-care steps don't help, it may be time to talk to your doctor about other solutions. Some people find success by avoiding gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley, rye, oats and many other foods.

A low-FODMAP diet may also be helpful. FODMAPS are carbohydrates that can be harder for the intestines to digest. Avoiding these foods helps some people with IBS. Ask your doctor before you begin any diet that eliminates certain foods.

# Do you know the signs of a drinking problem?

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, more than 15 million adults have an alcohol use disorder (AUD). This means they cannot stop or control their drinking.

It can be hard to admit that you or someone you love has AUD. Plus, someone with AUD can't just decide to stop drinking. AUD is a health condition that requires treatment and support. Knowing the signs can help a person seek medical help.

*Alcohol abuse is defined as:*

- A woman who has more than 7 drinks per week or more than 3 drinks per sitting.
- A man who has more than 14 drinks per week or more than 4 drinks per sitting.
- A person older than 65 who has more than 7 drinks per week or more than 3 drinks per sitting.



**Preventing alcohol abuse**

Alcohol problems can run in families. If you have a close family member with AUD, you may have to work harder than others to avoid alcohol problems. But, preventing alcohol abuse is possible. Follow these tips to help:

- Be extra cautious about signs of AUD and ask yourself the questions in this article on a regular basis.
- If you decide to drink, stop after one drink and switch to non-alcoholic beverages.
- Get regular checkups with your doctor. Follow any recommended treatment for health conditions.
- Avoid people who drink too much or abuse alcohol.
- Consider joining a support group.

**Did you know?**

As adults grow older, our bodies are less capable of tolerating addictive substances like alcohol, and are more susceptible to their negative effects.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT ALCOHOL ABUSE**  
If you're not sure whether your drinking is a problem, ask yourself:

Do I drink in the morning to "get my day started"?  
Have I ever hurt myself or others because of my drinking?

Do I ever hide my drinking from others or lie about how much I've had?

Do I have "blackouts" or memory lapses after drinking?  
Is drinking interfering with my relationships?

Have I been told by others that my drinking is a problem?

Have I tried to stop drinking, but keep slipping up?  
Do I feel that once I start drinking, I can't stop?

Is my alcohol use getting in the way of success at work?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may have AUD. Talk to your doctor about treatment that may help you.

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians



# Is dairy scary?

## Eating right with lactose intolerance

Does dairy bother your belly? Millions of people have lactose intolerance, or the inability to fully digest lactose. Lactose is a natural sugar found in dairy products like milk, cheese and ice cream. When lactose isn't properly digested, it leads to digestive problems.



### **Symptoms of lactose intolerance**

A person who has lactose intolerance may notice one or more of these signs after eating dairy products:

- Bloating, swelling of the abdomen
- Stomach ache
- Cramps
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Gas

Some people notice the symptoms within minutes, while others don't notice it until a few hours later.

### **Different levels of intolerance**

The level of intolerance can vary widely from person to person. Some people can eat small amounts of dairy without a problem. For instance, they may be able to eat a piece of cheddar cheese or a serving of yogurt. Others, however, notice bloating and discomfort when they drink a few sips of milk.

Finding out your tolerance level can be a bit of trial and error. If you notice symptoms after eating two pieces of pizza with cheese, for instance, try a smaller serving next time until you don't notice any problems.

### **Can I still eat dairy?**

Many people with lactose intolerance can still eat dairy.

- **Start with small amounts.** Many people can tolerate dairy if they eat small portions and gradually increase amounts.
- **Eat dairy only with meals.** Eat dairy only with other foods to help it digest.
- **Choose lactose-free milk.** Many lactose-free milk and ice cream products can be found in grocery stores.
- **Consider lactase supplements.** The enzyme lactase helps digest lactose. Ask a doctor before using these. They may not be safe for everyone, including small children.

### **Talk to a doctor or dietitian**

If you have ongoing stomach pain or diarrhea, talk to your doctor. If you aren't eating any dairy products, ask about seeing a dietitian who can give you diet advice to get the nutrients your body needs, especially calcium and vitamin D.



# Non-dairy calcium-rich foods

*Even if you can't eat dairy, there are plenty of foods that can help you meet your recommended daily calcium intake.*



**Calcium-fortified soy and almond milk**



**Tofu**



**Calcium-fortified orange juice**



**Sardines**



**Edamame**



**Kale, collard greens, broccoli**



**Figs**



**White beans**



**Okra**

## FEATURED RECIPE: Banana Berry Smoothie



### Ingredients:

- 2 medium frozen bananas
- 1 cup plain 2% calcium-fortified soy milk
- ½ cup cranberry juice, reduced sugar
- ½ cup blueberries, frozen
- ½ cup raspberries, frozen

### Directions:

Place all ingredients into a blender. Purée ingredients until well combined. Pour into 2 glasses of equal portions.

*Serves 2.* Per serving: 198 calories, 3 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 42 g total carbohydrates, 8 g dietary fiber, 87 mg sodium, 6 g protein, 170 mg calcium

# Dealing with nausea & vomiting in pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time of big changes in a woman's body. As hormones shift and the body works to nourish the baby, a number of uncomfortable symptoms can arise.

One of the most common is nausea and vomiting, commonly called morning sickness.



Fortunately, many women find some relief with some diet and lifestyle changes. They include:

- **Start taking a prenatal vitamin while trying to get pregnant.** Your body may get used to taking it before you have to deal with morning sickness. Plus, some nutrients are important to have in the early stages of pregnancy.
- **Take your prenatal multivitamin with food.** Some nutrients, such as iron, can cause nausea if taken on an empty stomach.
- **Eat dry toast or crackers in the morning before you get out of bed.** This helps settle your stomach.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Dehydration isn't good for you, and can lead to more nausea and fatigue. It may be helpful to drink fluids separately from eating foods.
- **Eat small,** frequent meals instead of three large meals throughout the day.
- **Use ginger.** This spice has been used for hundreds of years to help with nausea. Ginger capsules or tea made with real ginger are good choices.
- **Avoid smells** that bother you.



## Talk to your doctor

Be sure to tell your doctor you have nausea and vomiting. Your doctor will want to monitor you and your baby, and may offer medical treatment if the problem is severe. Some medications that may help include:

- **Vitamin B6 and doxylamine.** Vitamin B6 alone may help with nausea. It may be combined with doxylamine, which is found in some sleep aids. Be sure to check the label and ask your doctor before taking any medicines during pregnancy.
- **Prescription drugs.** Some drugs, known as antiemetics, prevent vomiting. Some are considered safe during pregnancy. You and your doctor can decide what is best.

## Severe nausea & vomiting

In some women, nausea and vomiting can become severe, leading to lack of nutrition and dehydration. This is known as hyperemesis gravidarum (HG), and it happens in about three percent of all pregnancies.

A woman with HG who cannot keep food or liquids down may need hospital care. Often, getting rehydrated with IV fluids and vitamins will help.

Though it can be miserable, most women get through morning sickness without serious complications. In most cases, nausea and vomiting that isn't severe will not harm you or your baby. But, controlling symptoms with safe and effective home remedies can make pregnancy much more enjoyable.

Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

# HOW TO SET UP AN emergency fund

An emergency fund is a great way to save yourself from financial disaster. It gives you peace of mind when unexpected expenses come up. And, it may help keep you out of debt when you need extra money for an emergency. People who don't have emergency funds may have to turn to high-interest loans or more credit card debt.

It can be difficult to set money aside when it's being used for other day-to-day things. But, it is possible to do with a little discipline and planning. Here's how:

- **Make it automatic.** Have some money automatically put in a separate account with each paycheck. Even if the amount is small, it can add up over time. An automatic transfer is more convenient than doing it yourself. You may find that after a while, you don't miss that extra money. You learn to get by without it.
- **Make it a priority.** Pay your emergency fund first, before you use your paycheck for non-necessary items. Make a budget that doesn't include your emergency money. This will ensure your bills and other necessities get paid without skipping your emergency fund payment.
- **Use a bank or credit union savings account.** These are easier to access in an emergency than savings bonds, mutual funds or certificates of deposit (CDs). But, don't put it in your regular checking account, where you may be tempted to use it for a non-emergency.
- **Keep the account totally separate.** Make sure that account is for emergencies only. Make it a savings account instead of checking. Be sure the account doesn't include fees or penalties.
- **"Do I need this?"** Cover your credit card with a savings message to reduce non-essential spending.



## Creative ways to save

Think of little ways you can change your daily routine to save money. You'll be surprised how much you can save!



Put away \$.50 a day in loose change.  
 Monthly savings: \$15  
 Yearly savings: \$180



Skip the coffee out and bring your own from home.  
 Monthly savings: \$80  
 Yearly savings: \$960



Bring your own lunch 3 days a week instead of eating out.  
 Monthly savings: \$96  
 Yearly savings: \$1,152



Eat dinner at home 2 more times per month.  
 Monthly savings: \$40-80  
 Yearly savings: \$480-960

# Get social for stress relief

Talking to others is a great way to cope with stress. On the flip side, feeling isolated or alone can increase stress levels. Seek out social support to help you deal with life's challenges. If you're not sure where to start, try these tips:

- **Reach out to others.** Make an effort to connect with people. Say "yes" when you get invited to a social gathering. Offer to help someone when they need it. Over time, you may find that your social connections have greatly increased because of your efforts.

- **Find value in lots of people.** You may find that neighbors, co-workers and family members all have positive roles to play in your life. You can have multiple friends who all have different things to offer.
- **Get face to face when you can.** It's good to find time to sit down with friends and family. Talking to someone in person may help you feel more calm and connected.
- **Get involved.** Find a class or group that offers things you enjoy. This is a great way to connect with people who share the same interests.



## Aiming for a stress-free life?

Trying to achieve a life without any stress isn't realistic. It may even make you more stressed when you don't succeed! Instead, look for healthy ways to cope with challenges.

Meditation, prayer, deep breathing and exercise can help you change how you react to stress. This can have a positive effect on your physical and mental health. Not all stress is bad for you if you know how to deal with it. In fact, learning to cope with stress can make you a healthier person.