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GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY

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THIS MONTH'S
Featured Article

ALZHEIMER'S UPDATE

PG. 3



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Senior Health Update

What Does a Geriatrician Do?

Our bodies change over time, and our healthcare needs to adapt with us. Geriatrics is the medical specialty focused on the high-quality, person-centered care we all need as we age. This care aims to improve health, independence and quality of life for older people.

Different people may benefit from geriatrics expertise at different times. There's no hard-and-fast rule, but it's generally best to start working with a geriatrician when:

- An older person's condition causes considerable impairment or frailty. This tends to happen after age 75 or when someone starts managing a number of health conditions.
- An older person's family, friends or other caregivers start feeling considerable stress related to care.
- Older adults or their caregivers start having trouble following complex treatment instructions or working with many different healthcare professionals for multiple health needs.

To locate a geriatrician in your area, visit [HealthInAging.org/find-a-geriatrics-healthcare-professional](https://www.healthinaging.org/find-a-geriatrics-healthcare-professional).

Source: American Geriatrics Society

Busting Health Myths

Are Eggs OK Once Again?

For years, we've heard about the health pitfalls of eating too many eggs. Once knocked for their high cholesterol content by many in the medical community, eggs now seem to be making a modest comeback.

One egg yolk has 200 mg of cholesterol, making it one of the richest sources of dietary cholesterol. But eggs also contain additional nutrients that may help lower the risk for heart disease. In addition, the moderate amount of fat in an egg, about 5 grams, is mostly healthier monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat.

It's also important to distinguish between cholesterol in the diet and blood cholesterol, which are only somewhat related. The focus on dietary cholesterol alone has been emphasized less, as more attention has been placed on the influence of saturated and trans fats on blood cholesterol.

In light of this information, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans has removed the previous recommendation to limit

consumption of dietary cholesterol to 300 mg per day. A solid body of research now shows that for most people, cholesterol in food has a lesser effect on blood levels of total cholesterol and harmful LDL cholesterol than does the mix of fats in the diet.

Of course, this research doesn't give a green light to daily three-egg omelets. And we also need to pay attention to how we eat our eggs. Scrambled eggs, salsa and a whole-wheat English muffin is a far different meal than scrambled eggs with cheese, sausages, home fries and white toast.

For those looking to eat healthfully, keeping the intake of eggs to a minimum will be best for most, emphasizing plant-based protein options when possible.

Sources: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health





Alzheimer's Update

Everyday Activities Can Help Boost Gray Matter as You Age

Higher levels of lifestyle physical activity, such as house cleaning, walking a dog and gardening, as well as traditional exercise activities, are associated with more gray matter in the brains of older adults, according to a study by researchers at Chicago's Rush University Medical Center. The *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences* recently published the study's findings.

The brain includes regions responsible for controlling muscle movement, experiencing the senses, thinking and feeling, memory and speech, and more. The volume of gray matter is one measure of brain health, but the amount often begins to decrease in late adulthood, even before symptoms of cognitive dysfunction may appear.

"More gray matter is associated with better cognitive function, while decreases in gray matter are associated with Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias," says Shannon Holloway, Ph.D., the lead author of the study. "A healthy lifestyle, such as participating in lifestyle physical activity, is beneficial for brain health and may help lessen gray matter atrophy."

The study measured the levels of lifestyle physical activity by 262 older adults in Rush's Memory and Aging Project, an ongoing study. Participants are recruited to undergo annual clinical evaluations and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, and to donate their brains and other parts of their bodies for research after their deaths.

Study participants wore a non-invasive device called an accelerometer continuously for seven to 10 days. The goal was to measure the frequency, duration and intensity of a participant's activities.

"One great strength of the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center is its amazing ability to follow up with participants, and its high retention rates of participants," Holloway says. As a result, the Memory and Aging Project captures a number of participants in the 80+ age group.

Holloway's analysis found the association between participants' actual physical activities and gray-matter volumes remained after further controlling for age, gender, education levels, body mass index and symptoms of depression, all of which are associated with lower levels of gray matter.

Lifestyle physical activity is "more realistic for older adults" than a structured exercise program that might require them to go to a gym, says Holloway. "Accessibility becomes an issue as one ages," she adds. "Transportation can be a problem. Gym settings can be intimidating for any individual, but especially so for older adults."

Our daily lifestyle physical activities are supportive of brain health, and "adults of all ages should continue to try and increase lifestyle physical activity to gain these benefits," Holloway says.

Sources: Rush University Medical Center; The *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*

To-Do List

Stay Safe in the Summer Sun

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can damage skin in as little as 15 minutes. Protecting yourself and your family is important — and easy.

- **Shade.** Seek shade under an umbrella, tree or other shelter before you need sun relief.
- **Clothing.** Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants can provide protection. If wearing this type of clothing isn't practical, at least try to wear a T-shirt or a beach cover-up. Wear a hat with a brim all the way around that shades your face, ears and the back of your neck.
- **Sunglasses.** Sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays offer the best protection. Most sold in the U.S., regardless of cost, meet this standard. Wraparound sunglasses work best because they block UV rays from sneaking in from the sides.
- **Sunscreen.** Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15 before you go outside, even on slightly cloudy or cool days.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Moms' Corner

Making Time for Your Mental and Physical Health

Your family depends on you, and you likely put them first, right? But taking care of yourself is the first step toward being able to be there for your family.

Staying mentally healthy starts with physical health. By eating right, exercising and getting enough sleep, you can help maintain your good mental health. Remember, you don't automatically have good mental health just because you don't have a mental-health illness. You have to work to keep your mind, and your outlook on life, healthy.

Your diet can have a direct effect on your energy level, physical health and mood.

A healthy diet contains foods from all of the basic food groups, provides the right number of calories to maintain a healthy weight, and does not have too much fat, sugar, salt or alcohol.

Regular exercise can help reduce anxiety and make you feel so much better as you go about your day. Take time today to do the good things for yourself that you do for your family. It's a win-win plan.

Source: Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Kids' Health

What Parents Need to Know About Kids and Sunscreen

Even a few serious sunburns can increase your child's chances of getting skin cancer, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To prevent sunburn, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants avoid sun exposure and wear lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts and brimmed hats that shade the neck. When adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply a minimal amount of sunscreen with at least 15 SPF (sun protection factor) to small areas, such as the infant's face and the backs of the hands.

For toddlers, preschoolers and older children, on both sunny and cloudy days, use a sunscreen with an SPF 15 or greater that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Be sure to apply enough sunscreen — about one ounce per application for an older child. Reapply sunscreen every two

hours and after swimming or sweating. For the best protection, apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors. Don't forget to protect ears, noses, lips and the tops of feet.

Use extra caution near water, sand and snow, as these surfaces reflect UV rays and may result in sunburn more quickly.

Unprotected skin can be damaged by the sun's UV rays in as little as 15 minutes. Yet it can take up to 12 hours for skin to show the full effect of sun exposure. So if your child's skin looks "a little pink" today, it may be burned tomorrow morning. To prevent further burning, get your child out of the sun.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For additional articles on your child's health and safety, visit MyGNP.com.



Health News You Can Use

Opioids No Better Than Non-Opioids for Back Pain and Arthritis

When it comes to treating the pain of chronic osteoarthritis, non-opioid pain relievers do the job better than opioids, and with fewer side effects, according to a recent study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The researchers, from the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Health Care System, studied 240 patients with moderate-to-severe chronic back pain or knee or hip osteoarthritis. This was the first randomized trial of opioid medication to look into long-term patient pain and function, according to the authors.

Patients were randomized and given either an opioid pain reliever (oxycodone, hydrocodone or morphine) or a non-opioid pain reliever (acetaminophen, topical lidocaine or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication). They then were given an 11-point scale to measure pain and function. Higher scores indicated less favorable results.

After 12 months, the patients receiving opioids reported an average of 3.4 on the function scale, and the non-opioid group reported 3.3, which the researchers deemed an insignificant difference. On the pain scale, however, the non-opioid patients reported 3.5, and the opioid patients reported 4.0, which was a significant difference. Also, the patients taking opioids reported significantly more medication side effects.

The researchers concluded that treatment with opioids was not superior to treatment with non-opioid medications for improving pain-related function over 12 months. They also noted that the study results do not support initiation of opioid therapy for moderate-to-severe chronic back pain or for hip or knee osteoarthritis pain.

Source: Journal of the American Medical Association

Health Q&A What Cancer Screenings Do I Need After Age 65?

Q: How often should I get cancer screenings now that I'm over age 65?

A: The answer, according to the American Cancer Society, depends on the test:

Men

- **Prostate Cancer.** Overall health status, and not age alone, is important. Men who can expect to live at least 10 more years should talk with their doctors about the uncertainties, risks and potential benefits of testing.

Women

- **Breast Cancer.** Plan to get a mammogram every two years, or you can choose to get one yearly. Ask your doctor about the pros and cons. It's important to know if you're at higher-than-average risk. If you are, talk with your doctor about whether you need additional testing.
- **Cervical Cancer.** No testing is needed if you've had regular cervical-cancer testing with normal results for the past 10 years. No testing is needed after a hysterectomy that removed the uterus and cervix as long as it was done for reasons not related to cervical cancer. Women with a history of a serious cervical pre-cancer should continue testing for 20 years after that diagnosis.

Men and Women

- **Colon Cancer.** Testing is recommended, and there are many options. Talk with your doctor about which tests are best for you and how often to test.
- **Lung Cancer.** If you have a history of smoking, talk with your doctor about whether to get an annual low-dose CT scan to screen for early lung cancer. Discuss the benefits, limitations and risks of screening.

Source: American Cancer Society

Do you have more questions?
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Eat Smart

Smart Snacking for Summer Road Trips

Want to arrive at your road-trip destination feeling energized and ready for fun?

Ditch the gas-station junk-food options and plan ahead by packing smart, delicious snacks. *The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* has some great suggestions. Think protein, healthy fiber and sensible carbs when packing snacks for the road. Some great options:

- Unsalted nuts
- Pre-washed fruit such as apples, pears, bananas and grapes
- Dried fruit
- Pre-cut raw veggies
- Whole-grain crackers or pretzels

- Plain popcorn
- Peanut butter

Leave that family-size bag of chips at home. It's too easy to grab and gulp as you drive. Pre-portion snacks into single-serving bags before you leave home.

Bring your cooler. Use reusable ice packs to keep the cooler temperature under 40°F. Start with everything already refrigerated or frozen so it stays cool longer. Some suggestions for cold foods:

- Reduced-fat cheese sticks or slices
- Reduced-sodium deli turkey sandwiches or wraps

- Individual containers of low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- Low-fat dip, hummus or guacamole to eat with veggies or whole-grain chips

Nix high-fat and high-sodium food on road trips. High-fat food may make you feel sluggish, while high-sodium food can make you thirsty (leading to frequent bathroom breaks). Restaurant meals on the road will already be providing more sodium than your normal at-home fare. So balance that out with healthy, lower-sodium snacks. And, of course, remember to bring plenty of water for the road.

Source: Harvard School of Public Health





Living with Diabetes

Can I Drink Alcohol Safely if I Have Diabetes?

Drinking alcohol, if you have diabetes, can cause a drop in blood glucose. Once the liver's stores of glucose are used up, a person who has consumed a lot of alcohol can't make more right away, and that can lead to dangerously low blood glucose or even death. Also, alcohol is processed by your liver, which is responsible for removing toxins (like alcohol or drugs) and processing medication, so if you are taking certain medications, drinking too much alcohol can cause liver damage.

If your doctor says you can safely drink alcohol, follow these tips:

- Women: no more than one drink per day. Men: no more than two drinks per day. (Note: craft beers can have twice the alcohol and calories as a light beer.)
- Don't drink on an empty stomach or when your blood glucose is low.
- For mixed drinks, choose calorie-free mixers such as diet soda, club soda, diet tonic water or water.

- As for anyone, with or without diabetes, don't drink and drive.
- Alcohol can cause hypoglycemia shortly after drinking and for up to 24 hours after drinking. Check your blood glucose before you drink, while you drink, before bed and throughout the night, and more often for up to 24 hours. Be sure your blood glucose is at a safe level (between 100 and 140 mg/dL) before you go to sleep. If it is low, eat something to raise it and check again before you go to sleep, and again overnight.
- The symptoms of too much alcohol and hypoglycemia can be similar: feeling sleepy, dizzy and confused. Always wear an I.D. that says "I have diabetes" to get the help you need. Also, be sure that your family and friends are aware of the symptoms of hypoglycemia and know what to do to help.

Source: American Diabetes Association

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