



Health hints

Fall 2014

Every season can inspire you to make small changes to your routine to improve your lifestyle. With autumn right around the corner, here are a few things to keep you motivated and healthier as the weather cools.

Nutrition makeover: eat well and save

Mastering a few tricks can help you keep your eating habits in check and your pantry stocked with the right items without going over your budget.

Plan, plan, plan!

Before you head to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week. Include meals like stews, casseroles or stir-fries, which “stretch” expensive items into more portions. Check to see what foods you already have and make a list for what you need to buy.

Get the best price

Check the local newspaper, online and at the store for sales and coupons. Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings at stores where you shop. Plan meals around specials or sales on meat and seafood — these are often the most expensive items on your list.

Buy in season

Buying fruits and vegetables in season can lower the cost and add to the freshness! If you’re not going to use them all right away, buy some that still need time to ripen.

Take back your cooking

Convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables, and instant rice, oatmeal or grits actually cost more than if you make them from scratch. Do it yourself — and save!

Be creative

Spice up your leftovers by using them in new ways. For example, use leftover chicken in stir-fry, on a garden salad or in chili. Remember, throwing away food is throwing away your money!

For more healthy eating information and tips visit ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Move more — but how much?

Exercise has great health benefits. But how much exercise is enough? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that adults follow these guidelines:

- Engage in moderate-intensity physical activity for at least 30 minutes five days or more a week, or
- Engage in vigorous-intensity physical activity for at least 20 minutes three days or more a week.

Here are some moderate activities to keep you sweating:

- Washing and waxing a car for 45-60 minutes
- Washing windows or floors for 45-60 minutes
- Gardening for 30-45 minutes
- Walking 1 ¾ miles in 35 minutes

Here are some vigorous activities:

- Climbing steps for 15 minutes
- Shoveling snow for 15 minutes
- Basketball (playing a game) for 15-20 minutes
- Jumping rope for 15 minutes

Keep in mind you should check with your doctor before beginning a new exercise program.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Physical Activity for a Healthy Weight* (accessed June 2014): cdc.gov/healthyweight/physical_activity/index.html.

How to recognize depression

October is National Depression Awareness month, which is a great time to learn a bit more about this health condition. Feeling low sometimes is normal, but depression is a serious issue that can affect your life at any point. Knowing the signs can help you manage it as quickly as possible. Symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling extremely sad, hopeless or guilty
- Feeling unfulfilled doing what you normally enjoy
- Feeling fatigued or less energetic
- Thoughts of death or self-harm

If you're feeling depressed, see a doctor immediately and remember to:

- Tell loved ones how you feel so you can get the support you need.
- Avoid isolating yourself from others.
- Surround yourself with people who are helpful and positive.
- Set realistic goals for your recovery so you don't feel overwhelmed.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health website: *Depression* (accessed June 2014): nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression.





Keep the flu at bay

The best way to protect yourself against the flu is to get vaccinated each year. Vaccine experts now recommend everyone six months and older get a flu shot. This is especially important if you live with or care for people at high risk for developing the flu, such as children younger than five, those who are 50 years of age or older and those with certain medical conditions including asthma, diabetes and chronic lung disease.¹

There are two types of vaccines:

- The “flu shot” is given with a needle. It’s for people older than six months, including healthy people, those with chronic medical conditions and pregnant women.
- The nasal-spray flu vaccine is for healthy people 2 to 49 years old who are not pregnant.

Yearly flu vaccinations should begin in September or as soon as the vaccine is available. Some people should not get a flu vaccine without first checking with a doctor. This includes children younger than six months of age and those who have:

- A severe allergy to chicken eggs.
- Had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past.
- Developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of getting an influenza vaccine.
- A moderate-to-severe illness with a fever. (They should wait until they recover to get vaccinated.)¹

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Key Facts about Seasonal Flu Vaccine* (July 2010): cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm.

Modern families: raise a happy and healthy family

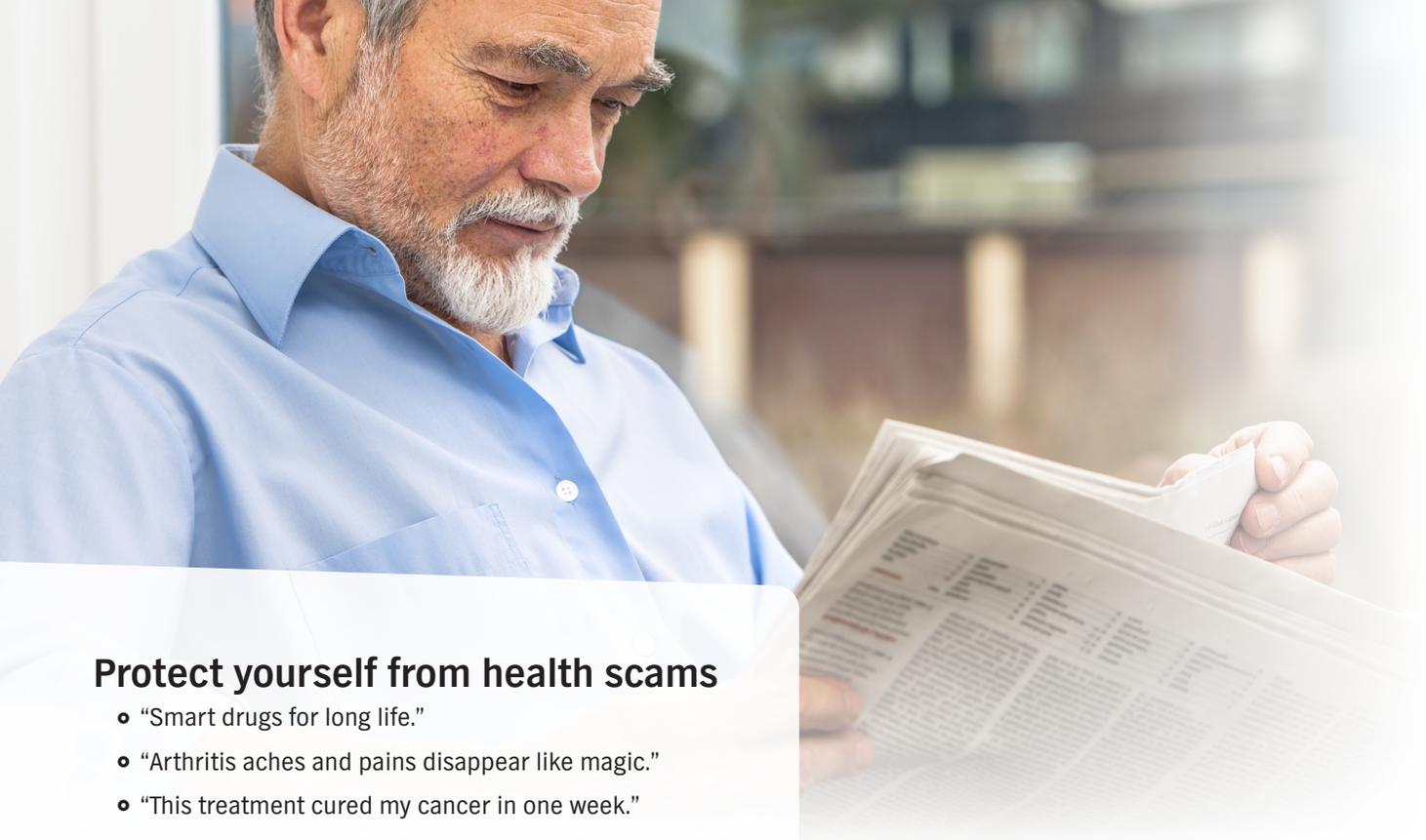
Families can vary in shapes and sizes. Whether you’re a single parent or part of a blended family, here are some great tips to raising a happy and healthy family.

- Create structure and routine by having meals together at the same time and sharing a special activity, like reading a book at bedtime.
- Playtime with your kids should be a priority. Have fun and enjoy each other’s company.
- Adult time is important. Hire a babysitter (or trade babysitting time with a friend) and treat yourself to a fun activity so you can feel recharged.
- Partner with your kids to cook dinner or plan events where you can be active together.
- Make sure to listen respectfully to one another.
- Don’t hide conflicts. Solve issues in a positive way. Family meetings are a structured way to discuss problems.
- Establish a fun, open and nonjudgmental environment.

Sources:

WebMD website: *Health and Parenting* (accessed June 2014): webmd.com/parenting/features/single-parents-tips.

Helpguide.org website: *Guide to Step-parenting & Blended Families* (accessed June 2014): helpguide.org/mental/blended_families_stepfamilies.htm.



Protect yourself from health scams

- “Smart drugs for long life.”
- “Arthritis aches and pains disappear like magic.”
- “This treatment cured my cancer in one week.”

Those claims sound good. But like they say, “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.” Health scams have been around for years. Today, there are more ways than ever to sell untested products. In addition to TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, infomercials, mail, telemarketing and even word of mouth, products are offered all over the Internet. Websites often describe miracle cures and emails tell stories of overnight magic. Sadly, older people are often the target of such scams. The problem is serious. Untested remedies may be harmful. They may get in the way of medicines prescribed by doctors. They also may waste money or keep people from getting the medical treatment they need. These scams also target people with diseases that have no cures, such as diabetes, arthritis and Alzheimer’s.

How can you protect yourself from health scams?

Be wary. Question what you see or hear in ads or on the Internet. Newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations don’t always check advertising claims. Find out about a product before you buy it. Don’t let a salesperson talk you into making a snap decision. Check with your health care provider first.



And Its Affiliate HealthKeepers, Inc.

Two federal agencies work to protect you from health scams:

- The Federal Trade Commission can help you spot fraud.
- The Food and Drug Administration assures the safety of prescription drugs, biological products, medical devices, food, cosmetics and radiation-emitting products.

If you have questions about a product, start by talking with your doctor. Getting the facts can help protect you from health scams.

Source: National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Aging website. *Beware of health scams* (Accessed June 2014): nia.nih.gov/health/publication/beware-health-scams.

Quick tip: watch your salt intake

Cutting the amount of sodium you eat could lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and even blindness. That’s because, for many people, salt can raise blood pressure to unhealthy levels. In fact, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends a daily intake of no more than 2,400 mg. That’s about one teaspoon! To lower your salt intake, avoid the salt shaker. Also, take a moment to look at the sodium content in convenience foods – processed meals, canned food and fast food can all contain large amounts of salt.