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Arthritis: How Staying Active Can Help

For people with arthritis, participating in joint-friendly physical activity can improve pain levels, function, mood and quality of life. These physical activities are low-impact, which means they put less stress on the body, reducing the risk of injury. Examples include walking, biking and swimming. Being physically active can also delay the onset of arthritis-related disability and can help people with arthritis manage other chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

Stay as active as your health allows, and modify your activity level (either what you are doing or the length of time you are doing it) depending on your arthritis symptoms.

Are you at risk of overdoing it? Don't dive in, become a "weekend warrior," and potentially injure yourself. Start slowly and pay attention to your body. If you're not already active, start with a small amount of activity, for example, 3 to 5 minutes twice a day. Add activity in 10-minute increments and allow enough time for your body to adjust each time before adding more activity.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



It's Back-to-School Time

Kids' Eye Exams Are Important for Classroom Success

An annual eye exam should be part of your child's back-to-school routine. From ages 6 to 18, a child's vision can change frequently or unexpectedly, which can lead to behavioral and attention issues. Most health-insurance plans, including those sold in health-insurance marketplaces, cover comprehensive pediatric eye exams.

Common signals that your child may be experiencing a vision problem include covering one eye, holding reading materials close to the face, a short attention span, and complaining of headaches or other discomfort.

Help prevent eye strain by monitoring your child's use of digital devices. Also, ensure that your child is wearing eye protection, when appropriate, for sports and outdoor activities.

Source: American Optometric Association

Back-to-School Immunizations

Soothing Vaccine Side Effects

While some children experience no reaction from immunizations, some experience mild reactions, such as pain at the injection site, rash or fever. These are normal and will soon go away. These tips can help:

- Review information your doctor gives you about the shots, especially information on possible side effects.
- Use a cool, wet cloth to reduce redness, soreness and swelling at the injection site.

- Reduce any fever with a cool sponge bath. If your doctor approves, give a non-aspirin pain reliever.
- Give your child lots of liquid. It's normal for some children to eat less during the 24 hours after getting vaccines.
- Pay extra attention to your child for a few days. If you see something that concerns you, call your doctor.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Students Are Back on the Roads

Drive Safely

It's important for drivers to slow down and pay attention when kids are present — especially before and after school. If you're dropping off your child in the school drop-off zone, follow all school directions. Don't double park. It blocks visibility for other children and drivers. Don't load or unload children across the street from the school.

If you're driving behind a bus, allow a greater following distance than if you were driving behind a car. It will give you more time to stop once the yellow lights start flashing. It's illegal in all 50 states to pass a school

bus that is stopped to load or unload children. If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop.

The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children. Stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus.

Source: National Safety Council



Rx Gourmet

Your Prescription for Healthy Eating
Heart Healthy, Diabetes Friendly — and Delicious!

Warm August days are perfect for the bright flavor of lemon-infused chicken. Top it with a lovely mango salsa, and you have a dish that's simply bursting with flavor.

Spicy Lemon Chicken with Mango Salsa

Serves 4

Ingredients:

4 4-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Chicken Marinade

Zest of 1 lemon

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice (1 to 2 lemons)

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon fresh ground pepper

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro (optional)

1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)

Mango Salsa

2 cups diced fresh mango

1 cup diced red bell pepper (or red and green mixed)

3 tablespoons minced red onion

1 tablespoon fresh lemon or lime juice

2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro

Salt and pepper to taste



Combine salsa ingredients in a bowl. Stir and season to taste with salt and pepper. (Can be made up to 8 hours ahead and refrigerated.)

Preheat grill to medium heat.

Mix together marinade ingredients in a medium bowl.

Trim excess fat from chicken, rinse and pat dry. Pound chicken to 1/2-inch thickness. Place chicken in bowl with marinade, turning to coat.

Turn grill to high and grill chicken over direct high heat for 6 to 8 minutes. Turn chicken and continue to cook for another 6 to 8 minutes until cooked through. Transfer to a serving plate. Top with mango salsa and serve immediately.

Per serving: 228 Calories; 5g Fat (20.4% calories from fat); 1g Saturated Fat; 27g Protein; 19g Carbohydrate; 3g Dietary Fiber; 66mg Cholesterol; 391mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain (Starch); 3 1/2 Lean Meat; 1/2 Vegetable; 1 Fruit; 1/2 Fat; 0 Other Carbohydrates.

Recipe is low fat, low calorie, diabetic friendly and gluten free.

Recipe courtesy of LowFatLifestyle.com. Visit them for more free recipes and healthy-cooking tips.



Back-to-School Bedtimes

What's Right for Your Child?

Don't wait until the night before school starts to adjust your child's bedtime. The sudden change could make it difficult for him to fall (and stay) asleep. Instead, slowly start making bedtime earlier about two weeks before the first day (try pushing it forward 5 to 15 minutes each day). This will help your child's circadian rhythm adjust to the new schedule. Not sure what time to set bedtime? Kids ages 7 to 12 need 10 to 11 hours of sleep, while older kids need 8 to 9 hours.

Calming activities, such as reading a book or taking a bath, can help your child wind down for bedtime. Plus, if you repeat the same process nightly, the routine will eventually cue your child's brain and body that it's time to sleep.

Keep electronics out of the bedroom, since they can lead to poor sleep. Not only can the "dings" of text messages wake your child, but the blue light that many devices emit may promote wakefulness. Make a rule that all devices need to be turned off one hour before bed.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

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Need Stress Relief? — Meditation Is a Tool That Can Help

Meditation is a mind-and-body practice with a long history of use for increasing calmness and physical relaxation, improving psychological balance, coping with illness, and enhancing overall health and well-being. Mind-and-body practices focus on the interactions among the brain, mind, body and behavior.

There are many types of meditation, but most have four elements in common:

- A quiet location with as few distractions as possible
- A specific, comfortable posture (sitting, lying down, walking or other positions)
- A focus of attention (a specially chosen word or set of words, an object or the sensations of the breath)

- An open attitude (letting distractions come and go naturally without judging them)

Many studies have looked at meditation for different conditions, and there's evidence that it may reduce blood pressure as well as symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome and flare-ups in people who have had ulcerative colitis. It may also ease symptoms of anxiety and depression and may help people with insomnia.

Sources: National Institutes of Health; National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health

DID YOU KNOW?



The Importance of Being Good to Yourself

Many older adults may feel lonely, sad or stressed due to the loss of loved ones, health problems, trouble paying bills or other reasons. You may feel "blah," you might not eat enough or you might over-eat. Being good to yourself can help you improve your energy level, eating habits and overall health.

To help turn things around, get enough sleep. Stay in touch with family and friends to keep your spirits up. Join a walking group or other social group. Surround yourself with people you enjoy.

Remember, it's never too late to improve your eating plan, be more physically active and be good to yourself for a healthier life.

Source: National Institutes of Health