

September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month.



Exercise: Rx for Childhood Obesity



Almost 20% of American children are obese, according to the CDC. Significantly overweight children are at elevated risk for chronic health problems, including asthma, sleep apnea, elevated blood pressure and joint problems. Obese youngsters often suffer from self-esteem problems and from bullying.

September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, an opportunity to learn strategies to help overweight children achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle, which can help ensure they reach the right weight for their own body type. Remember, kids come in all shapes and sizes, and should not be put on strict weight loss diets while they are still growing. A child's weight is a concern when it rapidly changes, but not when they are growing steadily and predictably. Your health care provider can help you know the difference.

Practice positive lifestyle habits with your children, including healthy eating, sufficient sleep, positive self-talk and ample physical activity. Remember, children thrive on routine. Offer nutritious foods with a consistent daily pattern (say, breakfast, lunch, dinner and a snack) rather than allowing constant grazing.

Children ages three through five years should be active throughout the day and youngsters from ages six through 17 should be physically active at least 60 minutes daily. It's a challenge to limit your child's screen time, but it's crucial for weight control.



Encourage participation in school or community sports activities and share information with other parents about physical activity opportunities in your neighborhood's parks and community centers. And remember, children imitate adults, so add physical activity to your life. Encourage your kids to join you in activities you all enjoy.

Grains: The Whole Truth



By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

If you love oatmeal, brown rice and whole-grain bread, you're in luck. Whole-grain foods are fiber-rich, loaded with vitamins and good for overall health.

However, most Americans choose refined grains (such as white bread or white rice) instead of nutrient-dense whole-grain options. What's the difference? All grains start out whole, with three nutrient-dense parts:

- Bran: contains fiber, B-vitamins and minerals.
- Germ: contains vitamin E, antioxidants and healthy, unsaturated fats.
- Endosperm: contains carbohydrate with some protein.

Removing the bran and germ turns a whole grain into a refined grain product, such as white rice and white flour. The problem? This refining process removes most of the fiber, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and healthful fats from the grains, leaving mostly carbs behind.

Statistics show that about 80% of consumers think whole grains are healthful. Yet whole grains only account for about 16% of our total grain intake on any given day. If they are so nutritious, why aren't we eating them more often? It comes down to availability, convenience and habit.

White bread, pasta, crackers and white rice are readily available at restaurants and grocery stores. It may take a bit of effort to switch to more whole grains, but it's worth it for their health benefits. Studies show that eating about three daily servings of whole grains may help reduce the risk of developing heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes.

Get more whole grains by requesting whole-grain bread or brown rice at restaurants, and by adding these whole grains and pseudo-grains to your grocery cart: pot barley, brown or wild rice, sorghum, buckwheat, quinoa, oats, popcorn, millet and whole-grain wheat options, including wheat berries, farro, bulgur and freekeh.



September is
Whole Grains Month.



Headache Relief

Tension headache is a common condition often triggered by our everyday physical activities and mental stressors. Tension headache pain is mild or moderate in the head, scalp or neck, causing muscle tightness in these areas. It can become intense and last for hours.

Common tension headache triggers:

- Ongoing physical or emotional stress.
- Too much alcohol or caffeine, chocolate and citrus fruits.
- Jaw clenching or teeth grinding.
- Eyestrain.
- Fatigue.
- Snoring or impaired sleep.
- Colds, flu or sinus infection.



Besides pain medications, take these steps for relief:

- Get enough sleep, avoid skipping meals and try to pace yourself.
- If you're seated for long periods, stand up and stretch frequently.
- Apply a cold compress to relieve pain in the back of the neck or temples.
- Accumulate at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity, such as brisk walking.
- Avoid medication overuse. Taking headache medications, including over-the-counter options, more than twice a week can increase the severity and frequency of your headaches.
- Try relaxation techniques, breathing meditation and other forms of tension relief to ease stress. Routinely strengthening and stretching the neck and shoulder muscles can significantly help.

Seek prompt medical care if your headache

is sudden and severe or follows a head injury; is accompanied by fever, stiff neck, confusion, seizure, double vision, weakness, numbness or difficulty speaking; or gets worse despite rest and pain medication.

Food Close to Home

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Supporting local farmers has gained momentum in the past ten years. Here's what you need to know about buying locally grown food.

Local food is generally produced in your area or state. It often tastes great because it's likely fresher than food that comes from more than 1,000 miles away. Plus, in-season food is usually available in surplus volumes, which means it may come at a good price.

Ask about locally grown food in your grocery store, and check your area for farmer's markets. Of course, that market may not have everything you need to stock your fridge. And if you live in the contiguous U.S., you're not going to find locally grown bananas or coffee beans. One of the limits of buying local is that not all communities have the habitat or farmland to grow or raise the ingredients they want.

Check your local state growing guide to see what's harvested in each season — it will differ based on where you live. For example, fresh blueberries are picked in April and May in Florida, but are picked in June through September in Oregon. Some foods are grown locally year-round, making them easier to access in all seasons. Tomatoes, peppers, mushrooms and cucumber can grow in indoor greenhouses, while herbs, lettuce and microgreens thrive in indoor vertical farms.

The bottom line? It's great to support locally grown food when you can. To learn more, search for **National Guide to Finding Local Food** at sustainableagriculture.net.



Q: Prostate health advice?

A: Every year more than 170,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer, and more than 30,000 die from the disease. The main risk is age greater than 65; other risks are family history of prostate cancer and African American descent. The survival rate is high when prostate cancer is caught early.

The American Cancer Society recommends talking with your health care provider about the benefits and risks of prostate cancer screening starting at age 50 if you're at average risk and expected to live for at least ten more years. Men at increased risk should have the discussion at age 40 or 45, depending on level of risk. Screening can be done with a PSA blood test and digital rectal exam.

The best ways to prevent prostate cancer are to eat plenty of vegetables and fruit, lose excess weight and, with your provider's okay, get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking, every week. — Elizabeth Smoots, MD



September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit coronavirus.gov.

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Help Prevent Medical Errors**, is at personalbest.com/extras/21V9tools.



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