

Start Heart Health Early

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Children's lives have changed a lot in the past 25 years. Compared to previous generations, today's kids spend more time with computers and video games, get less exercise, and consume more high-calorie beverages and fast foods.

All of these habits can hasten the onset of heart disease. Research indicates most American teens already have streaks of fat in their major arteries. The streaks can gradually develop into arterial plaque that may block arteries or prematurely trigger heart attacks.

Fortunately, parents can take steps to help prevent early cardiovascular disease from developing in their children. Here's what the American Heart Association recommends for raising heart-healthy kids:

Encourage fun physical activity.

Children need at least 60 minutes of exercise every day, which they can accumulate in 10-minute increments. On 3 days a week, kids need vigorous-intensity exercise. They also need activities that strengthen muscles and bones at least 3 days a week. The remaining activities can consist of moderate-intensity exercise and activities that improve body composition.

Kid-oriented favorites include biking, playing outdoors, skating, soccer and other sports, especially with other kids.

Remember to limit use of TVs, computers, cell phones and video games in the home to less than 2 hours a day; these sedentary activities contribute to weight gain.

Begin life-long healthy eating habits. Kids benefit from eating fruits and vegetables every day; even if your child is a finicky eater, keep offering a healthful variety. Also essential are whole grains, legumes, lean meats and low-fat dairy products.

Finally, limit processed snack foods that are high in trans fat, saturated fat, sugar, salt and calories. Replace sugary beverages with water and low-fat milk.

Source: "Dietary recommendations for children and adolescents: A guide for practitioners: Consensus statement from the American Heart Association." *Circulation* 112 (2005): 2061-2075.

BEST BITS

Safety reminder for college-bound kids: Be sure they learn the campus fire rules and regulations. *Tips:* They should use only UL-approved lamps and appliances; Avoid hanging anything – mobiles, netting – from sprinkler heads; and locate the nearest fire exits and extinguishers.

Campus Fire Safety website at www.campusfiresafety.org.

Source: "Info Bulletins." Campus Fire Safety, 2008. Accessed 6/8/09 at <http://www.campusfiresafety.org>.

Watch out for cyber scams. They tempt people with everything from opportunities to

make easy money from home to a share in an overseas family fortune. If you find yourself considering an offer you received via email or online ad, you risk losing your money or becoming an identity theft victim. Never give out personal information to a stranger or a company by email or on websites. **Be careful.**

Source: Email from Jonathon Cain, Systems Administrator, Oakstone Publishing, 6/3/09.

Economic uncertainty can strain your mental health. The incidence of depression, anxiety and addictions tends to rise during distressing times. If you're experiencing sadness or apathy, excessive anxiety or anger, poor sleep or difficulty concentrating or doing regular things, talk to your health care provider, employee assistance program, or clergy. Get help immediately if you have thoughts of suicide. **You don't have to go it alone.**

Source: "Getting through Tough Economic Times." The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 3/31/09. Accessed 4/20/09 at <http://www.samhsa.gov/economy>.

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SPECIAL REPORT

The Power of Prevention for a Healthier Future

Here's a number that may surprise you – nearly half of all Americans are battling at least one chronic disease. Some of the most common conditions are obesity, diabetes, arthritis, lung or heart disease, depression and asthma.

Chronic conditions account for 7 in 10 deaths and more than 75 cents of every dollar the U.S. spends on health care. Even more troubling, chronic disease cases are expected to grow 42% in just 14 years, making the need to reverse these trends vital and immediate.

The good news is that many early deaths and disabilities are preventable. Americans could live longer, better quality lives with more focus on preventive care and healthy lifestyle choices.

With behavioral change, we could eliminate at least 80% of heart disease and strokes, 80% of type 2 diabetes, and 30-60% of cancers, according to the American College of Preventive Medicine. We could also generate savings equivalent to 3-4 times the medical costs of chronic illness through improved work productivity. To help make these changes possible for every American requires broad public understanding and support of health promotion and preventive medicine.

But why wait? Individuals can do a lot to reduce the effects of poor health. You can become more aware of your daily decisions – whether to smoke or use alcohol, how much and what kinds of food to choose, or what activities to pursue. Here are 2 things you can do now:

- 1 Review your health habits with the checklist (below).
- 2 Then meet with your provider to find solutions that fit your personal needs.

Are You Prevention-Minded?

- I don't use tobacco and I avoid secondhand smoke.
- I maintain a healthy weight and avoid midriff fat.
- I don't abuse alcohol.

- I get a yearly flu shot.
- I exercise most days for at least 30 minutes.
- I eat a varied diet that includes several servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
- I have a health care provider I trust to help me with medical concerns.
- I have my blood pressure and cholesterol checked for heart health.
- I am screened for cancer according to my provider's advice.
- I make sure my provider knows my health history.
- I take medications as directed.
- I drive safely and always wear my seat belt.

You are probably WELL-informed if you checked all but 2 or 3 habits. Two clues to health improvement and protection: 1 If you use tobacco, quitting is the most important thing you can do for your health. 2 Be sure you have a good working relationship with your primary care provider.

Sources:

Almanac of Chronic Disease 2008 Edition. Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease, 2008; p 8, 46-47.

"5 Steps to Disease Prevention." *Mayo Clinic Women's Healthsource*, 3/08; p 1-2.

Chronic Disease Overview. CDC, 11/20/08. Accessed 6/15/09 at <http://www.cdc.gov/print.do?url=http://www.cdc.gov/NCCDPHP/overview.htm>.

Diet Detective

Losing weight almost always comes down to the dozens of daily micro choices we make – eat an apple or a slice of apple pie, or bike to work or drive.

List your most common decisions about both food and physical activity. Here's why: When you need to make one of these micro choices, it is usually based on memory. When you make a memory-based choice, you don't think too much because you're relying on information you already have. There's little thought involved.

Solution: Think about your choices throughout the day so the healthier decision becomes part of your memory. When that happens, healthy choices become automatic.

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FITNESS GUIDELINES

Best Calorie Burners?

When you're ready, exercise longer, turn up the heat, or both.

If you're like most Americans, you probably struggle to fit exercise into your busy schedule. So when you commit to exercising, you want to get the most from it – burning calories, losing weight and improved fitness.

Fitness experts recommend aerobic exercise for all 3 of these goals. Aerobic activities

elevate your heart rate through *moderate* or *vigorous* intensity – the difference is based on your fitness level, or what feels comfortable, to avoid strain or injury.

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity will produce a little sweat, but not leave you breathless or unable to converse. Minimum total time: 150 minutes per week. Examples: brisk walking, water aerobics, biking and ballroom dancing.

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity causes rapid breathing and substantially increases heart rate. Minimum total time: 75 minutes per week. Examples: jogging, race walking, running, hiking uphill, racquetball or aerobic machine workouts.

Guidelines: If time is short, you can accumulate 30 moderate minutes in 3 10-minute bouts during your day, or 20 vigorous minutes in 2 10-minute bouts. However, longer periods are best for improving cardiac fitness. And to lose weight and keep it off, you need to progress gradually to 60-90 minutes most days of the week.

Like variety? Great – you can combine moderate and vigorous intensity. For example, walk briskly for 30 minutes twice a week and jog or use a treadmill at higher intensity on 2-3 other days.

The chart provides an estimate of calories burned during various activities for various weights and shows how duration and intensity can impact your results. For more activities, visit www.shapeup.org.

Calories burned for time listed below:

| | 120 lbs. | 140 lbs. | 160 lbs. | 180 lbs. | 200 lbs. |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Bicycling, 10 min | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 | 120 |
| Bicycling (stationary), moderate, 30 min | 180 | 210 | 240 | 270 | 300 |
| Dancing, 20 min | 80 | 80 | 100 | 120 | 120 |
| Gardening, 60 min | 240 | 300 | 360 | 360 | 420 |
| Swimming slow crawl, 30 min | 210 | 240 | 270 | 300 | 360 |
| Swimming fast, 20 min | 180 | 220 | 260 | 280 | 320 |
| Walking 2 mph, 30 min | 60 | 60 | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Walking 4 mph, 60 min | 240 | 240 | 300 | 360 | 360 |

Note: Don't overdo it if you're a beginner. Consult your provider before starting or increasing exercise if you are inactive or have a chronic condition.

Stability Balls in the Workplace? Why You Should Keep Your Office Chair

Sitting puts more pressure on your spinal column and lower back than standing – and bad posture adds to the strain. This may explain why millions of office workers around the country experience back pain. Would replacing your office chair with a stability ball help straighten posture and strengthen your core muscles as you work?

Experts say, *No*. When you tire, no matter what you sit on, you're likely to slump. A chair has a backrest and arms for support, whereas a stability ball has neither – so a ball could strain your back and cause discomfort.

In addition, studies have shown that sitting on a stability ball all day does not provide a significant core workout.

Best advice: Make sure your office chair fits you properly and supports your lower back. Always use good posture and do simple stretches at your desk throughout the day. Get off your chair periodically: Take a short walk or stand while talking on the phone.

Sources:

"Sit on It: Exercise Ball vs. Office Chair." *ACE FitnessMatters*, 9-10/04: 10.

Zavitz, Ben, CPE. "The Latest Fad in Office Ergonomics: Exercise Balls." Environmental and Occupational Risk Management. Accessed 5/29/09 at http://www.eorm.com/ezone/pp17/on_ergo6.asp.

"Ergonomic Workstation Guidelines." NC State University Environmental Health & Safety. Accessed 4/17/09 at <http://www.ncsu.edu/ehs/www99/right/handsMan/office/ergonomic.html>.

GOAL LINE Don't like exercising outside your home? Rent or buy fitness DVDs online. Read reviews or watch previews first.

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MENTAL WELLBEING

Memory Busters

There are many conditions created by daily living that contribute to forgetfulness, such as:

Mental overload – If you are overwhelmed with details and tasks, you will probably have memory problems. After all, the more you have to learn and do, the more you have to forget.

Stress – The distraction of feeling stressed and worried can interfere with learning and retention (memory).

Depression and anxiety – Poor mental health can alter brain chemistry in ways that hinder thinking and memory.

Memory Boosters

Don't forget these helpful tips:

Stay mentally active. Exercise your concentration and memory – do a crossword, take a class, learn new ideas and read.

Learn to be observant and listen well. For example, notice your surroundings when driving to a new location or parking your car; when introduced to a new person, repeat the person's name.

Get organized. Use calendars, planners or lists, or leave notes where you're sure to see them. Establish fixed places to keep things such as keys and glasses.

Slow down! Give yourself time to think and absorb information.

And finally, there's nothing like a quality night's sleep to improve your mind, your memory and your mood.

Sources:

"Memory Loss With Aging: What's Normal, What's Not." FamilyDoctor.org, 2009. Accessed 6/16/09 at <http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/seniors/common-older/124.printerview.html>.

"Medical causes of memory problems and how they can be treated." NIH, National Institute on Aging, 11/25/08. Accessed 6/16/09 at <http://www.nia.nih.gov/Alzheimers/Publications/UnderstandingMemoryLoss/Medicalcauses.htm>.

Self-Care HELPS

More people are seeking professional help for economy-related anxiety and depression. If you or a loved one is feeling persistent sadness, fear or stress, consider participating in National Depression Screening Day on October 8. This free confidential program helps people (age 18+) identify mental health disorders and find treatment. To learn more, go to www.mentalhealthscreening.org/events/ndsd/attend.aspx.

MIND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Singing the Winter Blues

Do you ever feel so low during winter that you want to hibernate? Are these feelings more pronounced during the winter? For many people, this could indicate symptoms of *seasonal affective disorder* (SAD).

People with SAD may find they:

- Sleep more, eat more and withdraw from social activities.
- Have anxiety, irritability, headache and cravings for sweet, starchy foods.
- Gain weight due to over-eating or lack of physical activity during winter.

SAD is a form of depression linked to decreased daylight during the winter months. Natural daylight is many times brighter than indoor light. If you spend much of your winter indoors exposed only to artificial light, your brain knows the difference – and may trigger mood changes. SAD symptoms recede during spring and summer when days are longer and sunnier.

Scientists believe that SAD may be triggered by abnormal levels of serotonin and other neurotransmitters in the brain related to appetite, sleep, mood and body temperature – all of which appear to be disrupted in SAD patients.

If you have symptoms, consult your provider, who will want to rule out other causes of your depression. You may be diagnosed with SAD if you have had 3 consecutive winters of depression followed by a significant remission of symptoms in spring and summer.

Sources:

“Seasonal Affective Disorder: Blame It on Sunlight and Serotonin.” Swedish, 2009. Accessed 6/16/09 at <http://www.swedish.org/16939.cfm>.

“Factsheet: Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).” Mental Health America, 2009. Accessed 6/16/09 at <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/sad>.

“Holiday Depression & Stress.” National Mental Health Association. Accessed 7/21/03 at <http://www.nmha.org>.

“Seasonal Affective Disorder.” National Mental Health Association. Accessed 7/21/03 at <http://www.nmha.org>.

SAD Relief

Light therapy, or *phototherapy*, stimulates the brain to produce neurotransmitters. You sit a few feet away from a special light box for about 45 minutes a day. This light is stronger than ordinary office or household lighting. If light therapy works, your symptoms will improve significantly or disappear altogether.

Daily walking in daylight for 30-60 minutes several days a week may reduce depression. The fresh air, natural light and vigorous motion should boost your energy and mood; it may also help control food cravings that contribute to added pounds in the winter.

Source:

National Depression Screening Day. Mental Health America, 2009. Accessed 6/16/09 at <http://www.liveyourlifewell.org/index.cfm?objectid=DDAD50B5-1372-4D20-C869143B77A53916>.

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HEALTH CARE

Saving on Rx Drugs

With the high cost of prescription medications, paying less for them is a priority for many Americans. Try these shopping tips:

Understand your coverage. Many plans offer 3-tier coverage – try to get a drug from the lowest, or least expensive tier (usually generic no-name brands).

Reduce drug co-payments. Ask your provider about generics and prescriptions assistance programs. Eligibility requirements vary.

Try mail order. This option is good for drugs for a chronic condition such as type 2 diabetes. Do not use for drugs you need immediately or for those that require special handling.

Buying online? Only purchase medications your health care provider has prescribed in writing. Never buy from a site that does not require a prescription. You can find certified online pharmacies at the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy at www.nabp.net.

Splitting pills? Get your provider's okay first, because some pills are ineffective if they are split.

Compare prices. Pharmacies vary in prices just like any other retailer.

Still need it? If you've made lifestyle changes, such as exercising more and losing weight, you may be able to quit a medication or use a lower dosage. Note: Never stop taking meds or lower your dosage to save money. Always get your provider's okay first.

Avoid drug interactions. Adverse health effects from improper medication use or from

taking multiple drugs can be risky. If you get prescriptions from several providers, give each of them a complete list of what you're taking, including over-the-counter drugs, supplements or herbal products, at every visit.

Bottom line: Good health habits can do much to reduce your health care costs, including medication costs.

Sources:

"Saving Money On Prescription Drugs." FDA, 2005. Accessed 5/22/09 at www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2005/505_save.html.

"FAQs." FDA, 2009. Accessed 5/22/09 at <http://www.fda.gov/oc/buyonline/faqs.html>.

Lesley Alderman. "Strategies for Saving on Prescription Drugs." NY Times, 2/6/09. Accessed 5/22/09 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/07/health/06patient.html>.

What are Preventive Screenings? *By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP*

Preventive screenings are routine tests for people without symptoms. The tests check for conditions with no symptoms or for which symptoms don't immediately appear, such as cancer, unhealthy cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes.

How early detection can help: Many health conditions can be treated more effectively when caught early. Take unhealthy cholesterol as an example – cholesterol-lowering therapy can stop and even reverse fatty plaque buildup in the arteries which, if allowed to progress, could lead to a potentially fatal heart attack or stroke.

Other benefits: In many cases, early detection and treatment of serious diseases can prevent or reduce complications, or possibly save your life. Routine screening can also result in fewer sick days, less disability, and lower health care costs.

How screenings are determined: Your provider may advise tests if you're at risk for diseases that can be detected early and effectively treated, as indicated by a consensus of scientific evidence. The table below is a sampling of screening tests recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

The screening advantage: Tests can detect early signs of illness well before it becomes serious.

| DETECTED DISORDER | SCREENING TEST | RECOMMENDED FOR: |
|---|--|--|
| Unhealthy cholesterol women age 45+ and men 20-34 at increased heart disease risk. | Blood cholesterol | All men age 35+ and |
| High blood pressure | Blood pressure readings | Adults age 18+. |
| Chlamydia, women 24 a common sexually transmitted disease | Chlamydia swab or urine test and younger, and older | All sexually active at-risk transmitted disease |
| Type 2 diabetes blood pressure readings above 135/80. | Fasting blood glucose | Adults with repeated |
| Colon cancer | Fecal blood testing, | Adults age 50+ |

sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy

Source: U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstfix.htm>.

GOAL LINE Offer healthy snacks such as cut-up fruits and vegetables, or plain popcorn after school and during movies.

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SAFETY SOLUTIONS

SAFETY *After Dark*

Nighttime is when we are most likely to become victims of random crime – offenders use the cloak of darkness to hide. When making your way at night, arm yourself with these street-smart tips:

- ✓ **Don't walk alone.**
- ✓ **Avoid isolated areas**, such as parking lots and deserted streets or parks.
- ✓ **Have keys ready to open your car** or front door as you approach.
- ✓ **Wait for public transportation in well-populated, well-lit areas**; on the bus, sit near the driver.
- ✓ **When a cab drops you off**, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside.
- ✓ **Put away your headset** and cell phone or ear buds – such distractions can make you more vulnerable to an attacker.
- ✓ **Carry a personal safety device**, such as a whistle, personal alarm, heavy-duty flashlight, or pepper spray (check your state law) – keep them out and handy in risky places.
- ✓ **Learn basic self-defense** that can help you get away, defend yourself and avoid risky situations.
- ✓ **If attacked, scream and yell**, “Call 911 – someone is being attacked!” People often don't respond to “Help!”

[cutline]

Don't put yourself in danger – always stay aware of potentially risky situations and avoid them!

Avoiding Rollovers

Rollovers account for nearly a third of all vehicle crash fatalities. Any vehicle can be involved in a rollover; however, narrow vehicles with a higher center of gravity, such as SUVs, are more susceptible.

In addition to vehicle type, the driver, road and environment are important risk factors. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 40% of fatal rollover crashes were caused by excessive speed. More statistics about rollover fatalities to consider:

50% involved alcohol.

72% were not wearing seatbelts.

75% happened in rural areas.

90% occurred while attempting routine driving maneuvers, such as going straight or turning. Driver behavior, such as distraction, speeding, or being impaired, contributed.

No matter what you drive, know these 6 precautions from safety experts to reduce your rollover risk:

1. **Stay in control** – avoid alcohol or drug use, excessive speed, and drowsiness.
2. **If your vehicle edges off the road, don't brake**, but reduce speed gradually and ease back onto the road. Panic reduces your ability to stay in control.
3. **Maintain your vehicle's tires.**
4. **Use caution on rural roads.**
5. **Do not overload your SUV.** Excess weight can cause the vehicle to tip.
6. **Before you buy**, do the research using sites such as the NHTSA New Car Assessment Program (www.safercar.gov) for data on rollovers, frontal and side crash test results, and other safety ratings of the vehicles on your shopping list.

Back Up Carefully

Before you shift into reverse or back up in your SUV, take a good look. Because of the height of some SUVs, they are prone to back-over incidents, often involving children. It's better to be safe than sorry: Teach children to avoid playing around cars and driveways. Play it safe – before you back up, step out of your car and check to see if anyone is behind you or ask someone to check for you.

Sources:

Parker, James G. "Learn How to Handle Your SUV." *Family Safety & Health* (Summer 2007): 14-15.

"SUV Rollovers." Brain and Spinalcord.org. Accessed 5/28/09 at <http://www.brainandspinalcord.org/spinal-cord-injuries/suv-rollovers.html>.

"Before You Buy an SUV ..." PBS.org, 2005. Accessed 5/28/09 at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/rollover/etc/before.html>.

"Rollover – Causes" Safercar.gov. Accessed 5/29/09 at <http://www.safercar.gov/portal/site/safercar/menuitem.13dd5c887c7e1358fefe0a2f35a67789/?vgnnextoid=de78dc4e3e394110VgnVCM1000002fd17898RCRD>.

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EATING SMART

QUIZ: Sugar

We Americans love sugar. What's not so sweet is that the average person consumes

almost 150 pounds of it annually. Those extra calories contribute to overweight and obesity, so it's important to eat the sweet stuff in moderation. How much do you know about sugar?

1. According to federal guidelines, no more than 25% of your total calories should come from added sugars.

True False

2. Eating too much sugar causes diabetes.

True False

3. High fructose corn syrup (HFCS), a sweetener made from cornstarch, now accounts for approximately what percentage of calories in the American diet?

- a. 10%
- b. 15%
- c. 20%
- d. 35%

4. The USDA considers which of these to be added sugars?

- a. high fructose corn syrup
- b. fruit juice concentrates
- c. honey
- d. all of the above

ANSWERS

1. *True* – For a 2,000-calorie diet, the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend no more than 8 teaspoons, or 32 grams (4 grams = 1 teaspoon) a day. That's equal to ¼ cup of regular pancake syrup and less than one 12-ounce regular soft drink (10 teaspoons/40 grams), says the USDA.

2. *False* – The cause of diabetes is unknown. While eating foods high in sugar does not raise diabetes risk, watch your intake because excess calories from any source can cause weight gain – and overweight and obesity, along with heredity and lack of exercise, increase risk for diabetes.

3. *a* – About two-thirds of HFCS is in soft drinks and the rest is added to a very wide variety of processed foods. While researchers continue to investigate the exact role of HFCS in America's obesity epidemic, experts agree this sweetener adds hundreds of empty calories to our diets.

4. *d* – These sugars are added during processing to everything from pasta sauce to canned fruits. The Nutrition Facts Panel gives the amount of total sugars but doesn't list added sugars. Find these in the ingredients list.

Common sweeteners in processed foods:

In addition to corn syrup, other sugars to look for on food labels include brown, white, raw or cane sugar, corn sweetener, corn sugar, dextrose, glucose, and molasses. *Tip:* Fructose occurs naturally in fruit, a much healthier choice for satisfying your sweet tooth.

Sources:

Katherine Zeratsky, R.D., L.D. "High-fructose corn syrup: What are the concerns?" Mayo Clinic, 10/24/08. Accessed 6/1/09 at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/high-fructose-corn-syrup/AN01588>.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005. Chapter 7 Carbohydrates. USDA, 7/9/08. Accessed 6/1/09 at <http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/dga2005/document/html/chapter7.htm>.

“Finding the Hidden Sugar.” ADA, 12/8/06. Accessed 6/1/09 at http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home_10405_ENU_HTML.htm.

“Sweet as sugar, but not for health.” ADA. Accessed 6/1/09 at http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home_4531_ENU_HTML.htm.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Hearty Artichoke Chicken

- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cups uncooked chicken, chopped (about 1½ lbs)
- 2 14-oz cans artichoke hearts, drained and halved

- 2 4-oz cans sliced mushrooms, drained
- 2 tbsp green olives, sliced
- ¾ cup white wine (or water)
- 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
- Paprika to taste

- 1 In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high temp; add chicken and stir-fry 7-8 minutes.
- 2 Stir in artichoke hearts, mushrooms and olives.
- 3 Add wine and vinegar; reduce heat, cover and simmer 25 minutes.
- 4 Garnish with paprika. **Suggestion:** Serve over hot cooked noodles.

MAKES 7 CUPS (5 servings).

PER SERVING:

297 calories | 29.6g protein | 12.4g fat | 9g carbs | 5g fiber | 569mg sodium

GOAL LINE Looking for tobacco-cessation support online? Try “quitting” blogs, which may provide helpful, fresh ideas and success stories.

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EXPERT ADVICE

Does exercise raise energy?

A large body of research indicates exercise is one of the best ways to increase energy levels and reduce fatigue. In a University of Georgia study inactive folks boosted energy by 20% and cut fatigue by 65%, simply by doing low-intensity physical activities.

Scientists have learned that at the cellular level, exercise stimulates tiny organs called mitochondria inside your cells to produce energy. The mitochondria act like miniature power

plants, converting blood glucose into the energy your body needs. With regular physical activity, your body creates more energy-producing mitochondria in your cells.

Exercise also aids circulation by supplying your cells with more oxygen. Mitochondria need oxygen to make more energy. And mood-improving brain hormones rise with each bout of physical activity.

For optimum energy-boosting results: Avoid extremely strenuous workouts that fatigue you; mild-to-moderate activities such as walking are ideal.

Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Sources:

“Regular exercise plays a consistent and significant role in reducing fatigue.” ScienceDaily, 11-8-06. Accessed 6/2/09 at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/11/061101151005.htm>.

“Exercise for energy: Workouts that work.” WebMD, 2008. Accessed 6/2/09 at <http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/exercise-for-energy-workouts-that-work?print=true>.

“Regulation by exercise of skeletal muscle content of mitochondria and glut4.” *Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology* 59 (2008): 5-18.

Do I need a hearing aid?

Americans live in a world full of noise, so it's no wonder we are losing our hearing more than ever and at earlier ages. While most ear problems occur after age 60, the increasing rate among young people is likely a result of living in a modern noisy environment. Even children and teens are not exempt from premature hearing loss.

You could have hearing loss if you frequently notice these signs:

- sounds seem distorted or muffled
- difficulty understanding speech
- need for people to repeat speech
- trouble hearing over the phone
- raising TV or radio volume so high that others complain

If you suspect you may have hearing loss, see your provider for an evaluation to rule out correctable causes and to schedule a hearing test if necessary. A variety of treatment options and hearing aids are available to help no matter what your age.

October 18-24 is Hearing Aid Awareness Week.

Source:

“About Hearing Loss.” IHS, 2008. Accessed 5/22/09 at http://ihsinfo.org/IhsV2/News_Info/120_HAAW_News.cfm.

QUICK STUDIES

Does a bright outlook affect your health? In a recent study of nearly 10,000 American women, optimistic women lived longer and healthier than their pessimistic peers. Optimists had a 30% lower chance of dying from heart disease than pessimists. Researchers said they need more data to prove a direct relationship between optimism and better health.

Source: "Glass Half Full? Optimists Live Longer, According to University of Pittsburgh Study." UPMC, 3/5/09. Accessed 6/8/09 at <http://www.upmc.com/MediaRelations/NewsReleases/2009/Pages/Tindle-study.aspx>.

Metabolic syndrome – excess belly fat, unhealthy cholesterol, hypertension and high blood sugar – increases risk of heart attack and stroke. To see if diet affects metabolic syndrome, Spanish researchers compared 3 groups: a traditional Mediterranean diet plus extra virgin olive oil; a traditional Mediterranean diet plus nuts; and a plan with low-fat diet advice. After 1 year, the nut-added group fared best, with nearly a 14% drop in metabolic syndrome. The Med diet contains whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables, olive oil, moderate amounts of fish and alcohol and small amounts of dairy, meats and sweets. The fat source may matter as much as the amount.

Source: Charles Bankhead. "Nut-Enriched Mediterranean Diet Helps Reverse Metabolic Syndrome." MedPage Today, 12/8/08. Accessed 6/8/09 at <http://www.medpagetoday.com/PrimaryCare/DietNutrition/12069>.