

Personal Best

HOPE Health Letter®

JUNE 2021

Family Exercise Advice

Regular exercise together with family can help keep you strong physically and emotionally, especially during challenging times. Summer season is a good time to focus on being more active, especially outdoors.

Children and teens (ages six to 17) need to get at least one hour of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity every day, as recommended by the American Heart Association. Active children tend to have:

1. A healthy weight.
2. Strong heart, bones and muscles.
3. Good brain health and strong academic performance.
4. Positive mental health, confidence and self-esteem.
5. Less stress, anxiety and depression.

To find more family fitness time, plan and choose activities that fit your busy lifestyle.

Try to set aside at least 30 minutes three times a week for family exercise after work or dinner. If 30 minutes isn't doable, try two 15-minute sessions, or whatever fits everyone's schedule. Keep it simple.

- Walk 15 to 30 minutes every possible day together.
- Walk your dog or a neighbor's.



- Bike or skateboard on safe routes.
- Plan exploratory hikes.
- Paddle a canoe or kayak to build muscle.
- Play catch, volleyball, tennis or pickle ball.
- Plan active vacations or weekend outings.
- Choose one family physical activity every weekend.
- Include home chores (rake leaves, wash the car, clean up the garden).

Note: Adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week, such as brisk walking. You can break it up into segments of any length; it's the total amount that counts.

Now, turn off the digital distractions and head outdoors.

Learn more at cdc.gov/physicalactivity. And celebrate Family Health and Fitness Day (see page 3).

BEST bits



■ National Cancer Survivors Day is June 6.

This is an annual worldwide recognition of those who have survived cancer, inspiring those recently diagnosed with cancer, gathering support for them and their families, and providing outreach through our communities. Celebrate that we now have a better chance of surviving cancer — between 1991 and 2017, cancer death rates in the U.S. declined by 29%. Learn more at ncsd.org.



■ June is Home Safety Month,

sponsored by the Home Safety Council, and a good time for families to review safety precautions in and around their homes. The Council offers a broad variety of safety resources, including its Top Ten Tips on preventing the leading causes of injury in the home (falls, poisonings, burns, fires and choking). Learn more at homesafetycouncil.org.



■ Celebrate Cataract Awareness Month by learning more about this condition.

As America's population ages, our rate of blindness increases due to cataracts — the leading cause of vision loss across the globe. Cataracts, while generally painless, blur the eye's lens, blocking or changing the passage of light into the eye. Risk factors include aging, excess UV light, type 1 and type 2 diabetes, inflammation, injury and smoking. Learn more at preventblindness.org/cataract.

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 pandemic information visit coronavirus.gov.

“Nutrition is so important; it’s part of the game. It has helped with my recovery, allowed me to sleep better, and helped my body adapt quickly.”

— Mohamed Salah



TIP of the MONTH

Dietary Guidelines for 2020–2025

The new Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020–2025 breaks down nutrition by one’s life stage. The guidelines emphasize the importance of nutrition at every age because it’s never too early or too late to eat healthfully. The new recommendations include: not serving added sugar to children under age two; a reminder for pregnant women to eat low-mercury fish and seafood; and the importance for older adults to eat enough protein to help prevent the loss of lean muscle mass.

eating smart

Smart Sipping

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Sugar-sweetened beverages have become the single greatest source of calories and added sugars in the American diet. We consume lots of sugar-rich sodas, fruit drinks, iced tea and energy drinks, and that’s problematic because overconsumption is linked to an increased risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

How much sugar is too much? The American Heart Association recommends no more than six teaspoons of added sugars daily for women, and nine teaspoons for men. A regular 12-ounce soft drink contains eight teaspoons of added sugar, so even one sweet drink per day is too much. Treat these beverages like candy and have one occasionally, but don’t make them your daily drink of choice.



Sip smarter: Choose water most often. If you crave flavor, jazz it up by adding a squeeze of citrus (e.g., lemon, lime, orange), mint leaves, sliced cucumber, berries, fresh ginger or a cinnamon stick. Enjoy the color and fragrance.

Since coffee and tea are each 99% water, they are also good choices — just be aware of how much sugar you add and how much caffeine you consume. Try not to exceed 400 mg caffeine per day. An eight-ounce cup of coffee has about 80 to 100 mg of caffeine, while a cup of green or black tea has 25 to 50 mg. Herbal tea and decaf coffee are caffeine-free choices.



Fruit juice comes with some cautions — even though juice is made from fruit, processing renders it devoid of fiber and high in sugar. Limit your daily fruit juice intake to four to six ounces, if you drink any at all. Vegetable juice is fine, as long as it’s low in sodium and sugar.

Grilled Chicken Skewers with Peanut Dipping Sauce

1½ lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast cut into 1-inch cubes
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp garlic powder
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Sauce ingredients:

¼ cup peanut butter
1 tbsp sodium-reduced soy sauce
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 lime, juiced
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil

Preheat grill to medium. **Toss** chicken with salt, garlic and oil. **Mix** well and refrigerate for 20 minutes. **Thread** chicken onto skewers, and grill 10-15 minutes, turning every few minutes, or until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F.

Whisk together sauce ingredients; thin it with water to reach desired consistency.

Brush some peanut sauce over grilled chicken, and serve remaining sauce for dipping.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 288 calories | 33g protein | 15g total fat | 3g saturated fat | 6g mono fat | 5g poly fat | 6g carbohydrate | 2g sugar | 1g fiber | 477mg sodium

EASY recipe



Furry and Feathered Benefits

The benefits of pets have been well documented, including:

- Better heart health (lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels).
- Greater resistance to germs.
- Decreased loneliness, depression and anxiety.
- Increased opportunities for exercise, socialization, companionship, and sense of purpose.



During the pandemic, the positives of animal companions have become even more evident, and people have adopted pets in huge numbers to help them cope. Animals can satisfy the innate human need for physical contact; petting or cuddling an animal helps people relax. These encounters seem to be mutually satisfying: Animals also seek and enjoy interaction with humans, thereby contributing to a sense of connection and a strong bond with another sentient being.

Many experience a sense of joy from the attention and unconditional love that pets provide; it can be very comforting to people when they are in distress and their animal companions show particular interest in them. These experiences aren't limited to cuddly animals; birds, reptiles and other creatures can provide similar benefits.

There is little evidence that pets spread COVID-19 to people, although a few animals have become infected from humans. If you have been exposed to COVID-19 or suspect you may have the virus, shelter pets from potential infection. Contact your veterinarian if your pet appears sick or if you have questions about pet health.



Pets are humanizing. They remind us we have an obligation and responsibility to preserve and nurture and care for all life.

— James Cromwell



Family Health and Fitness Day is

June 12. Exercise for kids and parents is important for health. And pursuing fitness together can be fun, too. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises finding activities the whole family can enjoy, such as playing in the park. Celebrate this day — sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association — by visiting a local park or other recreation area. You can avoid crowded areas while you hike, play games, and explore other outdoor exercise together.

Smart Device Ergonomics

There are huge advantages to smart device technology, but it can also have a downside. Your smartphone and tablet give you flexibility about where and how you work, and help you manage your personal business, too.

But your posture and how you hold these devices can become a pain in the neck — and in other parts of your body, too. For example, holding your phone up to your ear for a long time can cause sore shoulders, elbows and neck.

Research into smart device ergonomics (the study of people in their working environment) shows you can help prevent physical stress from extended use of your tools with these strategies:

- Pay attention to how you are sitting. Keep your head in a neutral position as much as possible and consciously relax your elbows.
- Write fewer and shorter messages. For a long text, use your computer if possible, or use talk-to-text dictation software when you can.
- Instead of holding your phone to your ear for long conversations, use a Bluetooth headset or another device whenever possible.



- Use a cover which also doubles as a stand for your tablet, so you don't have to hold it.
- Take frequent breaks from your devices and stretch with this exercise from the American Physical Therapy Association: Fold your hands together; turn your palms away from your body as you stretch your arms over your head. Hold for ten seconds; repeat eight times.

And stand up when using your devices to reduce long sitting spells.

“I am no bird; and
no net ensnares me;
I am a free human
being with an
independent will.”

— Charlotte Brontë



June is Migraine and Headache

Awareness Month. Forty million Americans suffer from chronic migraines, tension and other headaches, according to the National Headache Foundation. The NIH reports headaches are a major cause of missed work. While sudden and severe headaches warrant immediate medical care, don't ignore any frequent or chronic headaches. Talk to your health care provider about how to relieve and even prevent headaches with healthy lifestyle changes, and by avoiding triggers, as well as medication, if needed. Learn more at [headaches.org](https://www.headaches.org).

body & mind

Guys: Checkup time?

Many men tend to put off medical care, according to the Cleveland Clinic MENTion It campaign that encourages men to seek proper care and work with their health care providers. The clinic's 2019 survey of nearly 1,200 men found that:

- 72% would rather do household chores than visit their care providers.
- 65% avoid getting care as long as possible even if they have symptoms or an injury.
- 20% tend to withhold health information from their providers.
- 37% had withheld information from their providers in the past, specifically because they weren't ready to deal with the potential diagnosis that might result, or because they thought the symptom would resolve itself.

In this survey, 61% said they'd be more likely to get their annual physical if seeing their provider was more convenient, with services such as virtual visits, scheduling appointments outside of work hours, and participating in local health screening events.

Men, take these practically painless steps toward better, easier care. Find a provider you can easily talk to, and together set a routine screening schedule. Don't shy away from reporting troubling symptoms. Also, if relevant, ask about quitting smoking, alcohol abuse or weight management.

Get prompt care for serious symptoms, including:

- Chest pain or pressure after physical exertion, stress or eating a meal.
- Chronic cough or breathing trouble.
- Unusual frequent urination.
- Blood in urine or stools.
- Unusual bowel or abdominal symptoms.
- Unusual weight loss.
- Ongoing depression or hopelessness.



Learn more during **Men's Health Week**, June 14 to 20, at menshealthmonth.org/week.html.

EXPERT advice

Q: OTC sleep aids?

A: **Over-the-counter (OTC) sleep aids are popular choices for sleeping difficulties.** Here are the pros and cons of nonprescription drugs and dietary supplements commonly used as sleep aids.

Nonprescription drugs: Most OTC sleep aids contain an antihistamine such as doxylamine or diphenhydramine. These antihistamines are used mainly to treat allergies and colds, and they cause drowsiness as a side effect. The sedation can aid sleep. But drug tolerance can quickly develop, so the drugs don't work for the long term. Drowsiness can also lead to confusion, falls or problems driving or operating equipment.

Dietary supplements: Lavender, chamomile, valerian and melatonin are some of the options for sleep. Side effects may include nausea, dizziness, headache or sedation. Ask your health care provider or pharmacist to check for interactions with other medications you're taking. Before purchasing a dietary supplement, get your provider's okay, and research brands carefully using reputable sources such as [consumerlab.com](https://www.consumerlab.com) or [usp.org](https://www.usp.org).



— Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Working at Home: Pitfalls to Avoid

Working from home can seem like a dream come true. However, leaving your commute behind for a home office comes with its own challenges.

Here are common pitfalls when working at home and how to avoid them:

- **You don't practice time management.** There's no doubt working at home comes with distractions — from children and pets to friends calling during your work day. Or you can't turn off your work day at quitting time. The solution? Make a work schedule and do your best to stick to it.



- **You have technical failures and no prompt help.** You're relying on your computer, internet connection, ability to video conference and other tech tools when you telecommute. Before you have a problem, make sure you know who handles tech help for your company — or if you can arrange for help and be reimbursed.



- **You feel isolated from coworkers.** Try to chat with colleagues outside office hours, or over a virtual lunch date or coffee break. Take the initiative to set up virtual office meetings with coworkers when you have ideas or concerns about a project.



- **You forget about ergonomics.** Making do with chairs and desks not meant for hours of sitting at work can result in back and neck pain and headaches. Ask your employer about outfitting your office with what you need or invest in the right equipment yourself — you'll be more efficient and feel better, too.



EXPERT advice

— Eric Endlich, PhD

Q: What are the signs of PTSD?

A: When exposed to a terrifying event, most people display some symptoms briefly, but only a fraction develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Individuals with PTSD have symptoms **lasting a month or more** after a traumatic event, including:

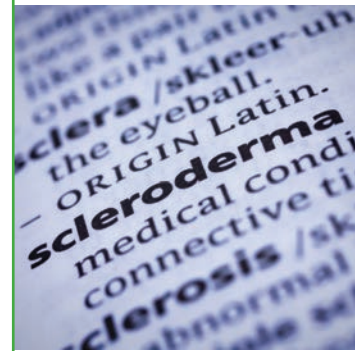
- At least one re-experiencing symptom such as flashbacks, bad dreams or unwanted negative thoughts.
- At least one avoidance symptom, which involves staying away from reminders of the trauma.
- At least two arousal symptoms, such as being sleepless, irritable, jumpy or easily startled.
- At least two mood-cognitive symptoms, including guilt, self-critical thoughts, loss of interest in activities or difficulty recalling details of the traumatic event.

Children may exhibit different symptoms, such as bedwetting or clinginess. While PTSD may improve over time, treatments such as talk therapy and medication can help as well.



“Self-esteem is as important to our well-being as legs are to a table. It is essential for physical and mental health and for happiness.”

— Louise Hart



June is Scleroderma Awareness Month,

a good time to learn about this autoimmune disease (weakened immunity), which can be local or systemic. Because symptoms are varied, diagnosis is sometimes difficult. Localized scleroderma causes patches of hard, tight skin. The more serious type of scleroderma can cause stiff joints and damage blood vessels and internal organs, including lungs and kidneys. While there's no cure, treatment can help control symptoms and disease progression. To learn more about this disease, which affects 300,000 Americans, visit scleroderma.org.



Q: Are rewards credit cards right for me?

A: Rewards credit cards offer incentives for using a particular card, such as cash back, sky miles, free points, or cash to spend at specified stores.

To determine if using rewards credit cards is right for you, review how you use credit cards. If you carry a balance each month, then it is important to focus on getting the lowest interest rate and paying off all credit card debt.

However, if you pay off your credit card in full each month, rewards credit cards may be a good fit. Travel often? Sky miles or travel points may be the best option. Do you buy from a particular retailer? A card with rewards redeemable for that retailer's products may work best.

Study your spending habits to identify which category is best. Some companies offer cash back, based on how much you purchase in different categories (gas, travel, dining out, etc.).

Studies have shown that people who have rewards credit cards may spend more to increase their rewards. Track your spending to make sure your new rewards card doesn't become a problem.

— Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, AFC

Checklist: Is Your First Aid Kit First Rate?

What should you have in a first aid kit? Use this handy Red Cross checklist to make sure you have the basics:

- ☐ Two absorbent compress dressings (5 x 9 inches)
- ☐ 25 adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- ☐ One adhesive cloth tape
- ☐ Five antibiotic ointment packets
- ☐ Five antiseptic wipe packets
- ☐ Two packets of aspirin
- ☐ One emergency blanket
- ☐ One breathing barrier (with one-way valve)
- ☐ One instant cold compress
- ☐ Two pairs of nonlatex gloves (size: large)
- ☐ Two hydrocortisone ointment packets
- ☐ One bandage gauze roll (roller) bandage (3 inches wide)
- ☐ One roller bandage (4 inches wide)
- ☐ Five pads sterile gauze pads (3 x 3 inches)
- ☐ Five sterile gauze pads (4 x 4 inches)
- ☐ Oral thermometer (non-mercury/no glass)
- ☐ Two triangular bandages
- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ Emergency first aid guide
- ☐ Epinephrine auto-injector

Note: Immediately replace items that you have used.



SAFETY CORNER



Pavement Burns

Summer is here and in most parts of the country, it's getting hotter. You may be tempted to go barefoot, but be warned — you can get burned on pavement, especially asphalt, which absorbs heat. At peak temperatures, pavement can get hot enough to cause second-degree burns. To prevent pavement burns:

Wear foot protection even if you are just getting the mail.

Watch little ones. Make sure they are wearing foot protection before going outside on a hot day.

Remember that darker surfaces usually absorb heat more readily.

Protect your pets. Walk your dogs on the grass or invest in dog booties or paw wax.

Your Child's Wellness

By Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus

As parents, you are vital to shaping your children's physical and mental well-being now and for years to come. First, be a role model. Show them the basics as often as possible: why and how to eat well and enjoy physical fitness. These are basic to helping kids grow strong, learn to be safe and maintain a healthy weight.

And above all, facilitate self-confidence to ensure your children feel good about themselves and want to make positive choices.

Kids' EATING WELL BASICS:

Eat more:

- Fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese and fortified nondairy beverages.
- Protein-rich foods, including seafood, lean meats, poultry, eggs, legumes, nuts and seeds.

Limit processed food products with:

- Refined grains, saturated fats, butter, margarine, and sodium.
- Added sugars and sodium, found in pizzas, chips, crackers, sugar-sweetened drinks and desserts.
- Fast foods high in calories, saturated fat, refined grains and added sodium.

Note: These foods and beverages can be part of a healthy eating plan on a limited basis.



Kids' DAILY EXERCISE GUIDE:

- **For preschoolers,** try to ensure they get about three hours of physical activity spread throughout each day. Include a mix of light-, moderate- or vigorous-intensity activities.
- **For school-age children (ages six to 17),** encourage at least one hour per day of moderate- to vigorous-intensity activities, such as bicycling, walking, rope jumping, playing basketball or soccer.

Encourage kids to join athletic programs or take lessons in a favorite sport (as public health guidelines permit).



REDUCE SCREEN TIME:

Most adolescents in the U.S. aren't getting enough exercise as electronic screen time increasingly replaces physical activity. In a 2019 study, researchers found that 85% of girls and 78% of boys failed to meet the recommended one hour of physical activity daily; data reported involved 1.6 million students ages 11 to 17.

To find exercise time for your kids (and you) actively limit screen time: television, video games, media and digital devices. You could design a rationing program that identifies specific goals for kids to earn screen time. For example, 500 steps walking the dog or doing physical chores could earn a child 15 to 30 minutes of screen time.

Banish phones and tablets while you have meals together. Focus on conversation.

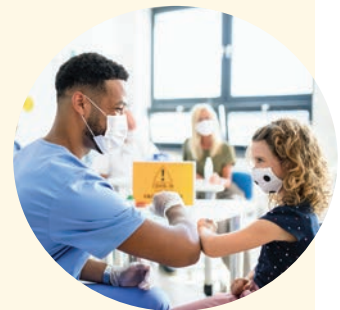


VACCINATIONS:

Make sure your child is up to date on immunizations. From babyhood through old age, vaccines are effective protection from serious diseases — preventing days lost from school and potential disabilities. While the chances of your child getting measles, pertussis, or other vaccine-preventable diseases might be low, that's because vaccines work and have reduced the rate of serious illnesses. It doesn't mean your child can get by without the protection immunization offers if they're exposed.

What's more, by ensuring your child is vaccinated you are not only protecting your youngster, but helping stop the spread of diseases to other kids, families and communities. If you haven't already, ask your health care provider when your child can receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Learn about recommended immunizations for infancy through age 18 at [cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/birth-6-vaccine-schedule.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/birth-6-vaccine-schedule.html).



DR. ZORBA'S corner

Walking and Your Brain

The slower you walk, the greater your cognitive decline may be, according to research published in the *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*. Scientists recorded the walking speed and brain health of 370 people 65 to 74 years old for nearly ten years in the San Antonio Longitudinal Study of Aging. Brain health was measured with tests, such as ability to concentrate, to recall names, language and other aspects of thinking. Researchers used a timed 10-foot walk to measure gait speed, which found that seniors who walked quicker had better brain function a decade later. And those able to continue walking quickly seemed to maintain their ability to think clearly. We don't know if this is cause and effect but what we do know is that exercise improves brain function. So if you want to keep your mind sharp, kick it up a notch. — Zorba Paster, MD

Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

Phone: 800-871-9525 • Fax: 205-437-3084 • Email: PBeditor@ebix.com

Website: personalbest.com and hopehealth.com

Executive Editor: Susan Cottman

Advisers: Patricia C. Buchsel, RN, MSN, FAAN; Jamie Lynn Byram, MBA, AFC, MS; Eric Endlich, PhD; Mary P. Hollins, MS, JD, CSHM; Kenneth Holtyn, MS; Reed Humphrey, PhD; Gary B. Kushner, SPHR, CBP; Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus; Zorba Paster, MD; Charles Stuart Platkin, PhD; Cara Rosenbloom, RD; Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP; Margaret Spencer, MD

Editor: Airmie Miller • Designer: Sheila Brooks

The content herein is in no way intended to serve as a substitute for professional advice. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet or exercise, talk to your health care provider. Sources available on request. © 2021 Ebix Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction in any form of any part of this publication is a violation of federal copyright law and is strictly prohibited. Personal Best® and Hope Health® are registered trademarks of Ebix Inc. Two Perimeter Park South, Suite 160 East, Birmingham, AL 35243 • Please recycle.

June Fill-in-the-Blank Puzzle

Find out how well you know the topics covered in this issue of the newsletter.

- 1 A regular 12-ounce soft drink contains _____ teaspoons of added sugar.
- 2 Most OTC sleep aids contain an _____ such as doxylamine or diphenhydramine.
- 3 According to a survey 72% of men would rather do _____ than visit their care providers.
- 4 The NIH reports that _____ are a major cause of missed work.
- 5 Individuals with _____ have symptoms lasting a month or more after a traumatic event.
- 6 Because symptoms are varied, diagnosis of _____ is sometimes difficult.
- 7 At peak temperatures, _____ can get hot enough to cause second-degree burns.
- 8 Most adolescents in the U.S. aren't getting enough _____ due to electronic screen time: television, games, media and smart devices.



You'll find the answers at personalbest.com/extras/Jun2021puzzle.pdf.

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, Safety Room by Room, is at personalbest.com/extras/21V6tools.