

Personal Best

HOPE Health Letter®

AUGUST 2021

Positive Body Image

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Many Americans are dissatisfied with their appearance. Girls, and children of parents who diet or have poor body image, are more likely to develop a poor body image. The intense societal focus on how girls and women look, combined with unrealistic media standards of beauty, may contribute to body image issues; boys and men can be affected as well. Being underweight or overweight, or being teased or bullied about your appearance, can also lead to a negative self-image.

Feeling bad about how your body looks can raise your risk of low self-esteem, eating disorders and depression. Fortunately, there are several ways to improve your body image, including:

- Identifying negative thoughts, beliefs and behaviors you'd like to change (e.g., frequently envying a friend's body).
- Finding some aspect of your body that you **do** like (e.g., eyes, hair, smile) and focus on that.
- Appreciating all the things your body can do — not simply what it looks like.
- Working on accepting your body as is. Avoid making negative statements — even to yourself — about your appearance.
- Rehearsing positive statements about yourself (not just your body).
- Learning to view food as nourishment, not a reward or punishment.

To help your children develop a healthy body image:

- Avoid negative statements about anyone's food or bodies.
- Compliment your children on their values and accomplishments, not their appearance.
- Avoid obsessing about your own appearance.
- Model healthful habits.



Over time, you can learn to feel better about yourself.

BEST bits

■ Best picks for late summer produce?

A bountiful harvest of summer continues in August with these especially healthful fruits and vegetables: acorn squash, apricots, berries, butternut squash, cantaloupe, eggplant, green beans, kiwi, kohlrabi, mangoes, okra, peaches, plums, summer squash, Swiss chard and watermelon. While you can get most of these choices year-round, now is the season to take advantage of their peak flavor and nutrition.



■ Tanning is skin damage — a reminder during Summer Sun

Safety Month to protect your skin and health with sunscreen, now and any time of year you are outdoors exposed to sunshine for extended periods. The best prescription: Apply one ounce of broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protective factor (SPF) of at least 30 to your exposed skin and reapply every two hours. Healthy skin is protected skin.



■ Contact Lens Week is August 19 to 23.

This event emphasizes the importance of healthy contact lens hygiene practices in protecting wearers against serious eye infections and other illnesses. Always wash your hands thoroughly before handling your lenses; it's vital to protecting eye health. Follow your eye doctor's advice for wearing, cleaning and storing your lenses. Learn more at [cdc.gov/contactlenses](https://www.cdc.gov/contactlenses).

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](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

“If you are ever at a loss to support a flagging conversation, introduce the subject of eating.”

— Leigh Hunt



TIP of the MONTH

Fish and Seafood

Add fish and seafood to your menu at least twice a week, especially if you have a history of vascular disease. A recent study shows that having two servings (175g total) of fish — especially oily fish, such as salmon, trout, oysters and albacore tuna — help lower the risk of cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke, especially if you have pre-existing heart disease.



eating smart

Keto Diet: Pros and Cons

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

The most-searched diet trend in 2021 to date is the ketogenic diet, casually known as **keto**. This diet plan is very low in carbohydrates but is very high in fat (keto is about 75% fat, and the USDA Dietary Guidelines recommend only 25% fat). The goal of the diet is to get your body into a state of **ketosis**, where you burn fat as energy instead of carbohydrates.

The **ketogenic diet** was originally developed to treat children with epilepsy and seizure disorders, and research backs up the diet for this use. But now it's more common to see keto used for weight loss or to help manage type 2 diabetes. Is it healthy or advisable for these uses? Consider the pros and cons:

Pros:

- Some studies show it can help with short-term weight loss.
- Research shows it may help people with type 2 diabetes balance their blood sugar levels and improve insulin sensitivity.
- Keto includes high-fat foods, such as red meat, fatty fish, avocado, cheese and nuts, which help with feeling full for longer.

Cons:

- Food choices are restricted, making keto hard to stick with long term and making weight regain common.
- It may cause nutrient deficiencies, since whole food groups are excluded and variety is limited.
- The lack of fiber may negatively affect gut health and cause constipation.
- It could cause kidney stones and raise heart disease risk.
- It's unsafe for those with gallbladder, liver, pancreas or thyroid conditions.

Research is ongoing for using keto to manage type 2 diabetes, weight and some types of cancer. But remember, **diets are not one size fits all**. Work with a dietitian to determine the right eating plan for you.



Zesty Shrimp and Watermelon Kabobs

EASY recipe

2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp sodium-reduced tamari soy sauce
½ tsp hot sauce, or more to taste
1 lime, juiced
2 cups watermelon, cut into 1-inch cubes

1 lb uncooked jumbo shrimp,
peeled and deveined
¼ cup chopped fresh mint
Pinch salt

Set barbeque at 400°F or preheat grill to medium. In a small bowl, combine oil, soy sauce, hot sauce and lime juice. **Stir** to combine. **Thread** watermelon and shrimp onto barbeque skewers. **Brush** with sauce. **Grill**, covered, until shrimp turn pink, turning once. **Sprinkle** with mint and salt, and serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 171 calories | 24g protein | 5g total fat | 1g saturated fat
2g mono fat | 1g poly fat | 9g carbohydrate | 5g sugar | 1g fiber | 373mg sodium



“The dog that trots about finds a bone.”

— Golda Meir

Aging in Place

Most people prefer to stay in their own homes and communities as they age.

This can provide continued independence, privacy, comfort and the ability to achieve everyday needs and enjoy personal pursuits.

Our senior population in the U.S. is increasing, mostly due to our aging baby boomer generation, healthier lifestyles and improved medical solutions. Are you preparing for your own retirement needs or assisting your parents with healthy aging in place?

The CDC defines aging in place as the ability to live in one's home and community safely, independently and comfortably, regardless of age, income or ability level. This requires that homes be designed to ensure safety and help prevent situations that can lead to injuries and other avoidable problems.

In recent years, many communities have helped to meet these needs by providing older adults with opportunities to remain active in society, promoting overall well-being and quality of life. One example is offering no- and low-cost door-to-door transportation services to adult day care, senior centers and medical appointments.

While not all neighborhoods offer such services, when aging in place is supported, communities also benefit. We're fortunate that older adults tend to volunteer more than any other age group. In general, we can also learn from the life experiences of older adults. And helping them to remain active in their communities can ultimately help people of all ages.



You're as young as you feel.

Perfectionism isn't perfect. Being a perfectionist can make work and life challenging. Perfectionism, according to the American Psychological Association, means demanding an extremely high, even impossibly flawless, level of personal performance. And that often causes anxiety over details, slowing work completion. What helps: Make checklists, don't ruminate over what might go wrong and recognize the point of diminishing returns when trying to complete a task flawlessly. Remember, sometimes just finishing a project that meets all of its requirements is a worthwhile goal.



The Post-Vacation Slump

Whether you visit a resort or indulge in a staycation, time away from work is important. Vacations help lower stress levels and bring you back to work feeling refreshed. At least, that's the idea. But experiencing a post-vacation slump isn't unusual. You may dread heading back to daily chores at home and worry about a mountain of work awaiting you at your job.

Tips to help you avoid a letdown after vacation:

- Before you take time off, see if you can schedule your first day back for midweek; a shorter week can help you make it easier to transition back into your job. Check your calendar for meetings or new projects set for your first week after vacation. If possible, reschedule low-priority items for later in the week so you'll feel less overwhelmed.
- Before you leave town, tidy up so you don't return to a messy home and extra chores.
- If you aren't returning to work for a day or two, review your emails and voicemails in preparation for returning to your job. If you return to work immediately, consider getting up a bit earlier than usual to tackle communications you missed and need to go over.
- Feeling down or the need to focus after your vacation? Work in a daily walk or other exercise. Physical activity can boost your mood and focus to help you get over a vacation slump quicker.



“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure.”

— Colin Powell



August is Psoriasis Action Month.

Psoriasis is a chronic autoimmune skin disease which speeds up the growth of skin cells. It causes inflamed, scaly patches of skin, usually on elbows, knees and scalp. Psoriatic arthritis can also occur. Psoriasis treatments include topical creams, ultraviolet light therapy and, sometimes, prescription drugs. Avoiding triggers that worsen symptoms — including cold weather and skin injuries — also helps. Learn more at psoriasis.org.

body & mind

Stress and the Body

When feeling mentally stressed, step back and try to regain control. Reducing stress can lessen its effects on your body. Stressful days can produce many physical symptoms, including muscle tension, backache, headache, heartburn and insomnia. Ongoing stress can also lead to:

Reduced immunity: Stress affects your immune system, potentially making you more vulnerable to infections and disease.

High blood pressure: Elevated stress hormones (cortisol) can tighten your blood vessels, raising blood pressure.

High blood sugar: Stress may cause your liver to release extra glucose into your bloodstream, potentially leading to type 2 diabetes.

Digestive disorders: Stress can lead to stomachache, nausea, diarrhea or constipation.

Weight gain or loss: Stress may contribute to weight gain by raising cortisol that can lead to overeating, especially high-calorie comfort foods. Stress can also reduce appetite.

To help offset daily stress, regular exercise may be the best means of helping you feel better. Exercise raises your brain's endorphins and endocannabinoids, feel-good neurotransmitters. It also eases physical and mental tension and helps erase your daily frustrations. Make it a habit.



EXPERT advice

— Eric Endlich, PhD

Q: Effects of phubbing?

A: **Phubbing, or phone snubbing,** occurs when people use their smartphones and ignore other people in their presence. Surveys show 90% of people recently phubbed someone, and 100% have been phubbed.

Phubbing can cause resentment, jealousy and unsatisfying social interactions. Humans have a basic need to belong, and phubbing is a form of social exclusion, fostering isolation and low self-esteem — and possibly having negative effects on the phubber as well. Even observers of phubbing report higher stress levels and rate phubbers as less warm and competent.

Being phubbed leads people to phub others, and to turn to social media (not in-person interaction) for comfort — which then has its negative emotional consequences, such as anxiety, depression and interrupted sleep. So when others are near, consider putting down your phone and paying attention to them.



Yoga 101

Yoga is not just for the fit and hyper-flexible.

But what if you haven't exercised in years or have a health problem, such as arthritis? Yoga truly is for just about everyone because it builds on very gentle, easy poses, including those below, which can be adapted for most people. (Always get your health care provider's okay first.)



Yoga breathing: Sit quietly with eyes closed. Observe your breathing: Is it shallow, slow or fast? Concentrate on slowing your breath comfortably, lengthening exhalations. You'll likely feel tension melt away.

Head movements: To relax face, neck and shoulders, sit in a chair or stand. Inhale slowly through your nose. Exhale as you slowly tilt your head forward. Inhale slowly, lifting your head. Exhale, slowly turning your head to one side, without straining. Inhale, moving your head back to center; repeat to the other side. Exhale, lowering your head toward your chest, then inhale slowly and raise your head again.



Forward bend: For a gentle stretch, stand with feet about shoulders' width apart. Inhale slowly as you slowly raise your arms overhead. Pause. Exhale slowly, bending forward from the waist toward your desk or, if you're very flexible, the floor. Keep knees slightly bent. Pause. Inhale as you slowly straighten your body, raising your arms overhead. Pause, exhale and lower arms to your side.

Repeat all the steps above as many times as comfortable. To learn more, search for **yoga** at nccih.nih.gov.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD

EXPERT advice

Q: What is blood sugar tolerance?

A: **Blood sugar tolerance is your body's response to glucose**, the main sugar that fuels your cells. The body normally tolerates glucose well and moves any extra blood sugar into the cells to maintain normal blood sugar levels (glucose tolerance). But in type 2 diabetes, the body loses its tolerance for sugar and can't handle it properly; this results in abnormally high blood sugar levels (glucose intolerance).

Are you due for type 2 diabetes screening? Discuss testing your blood sugar tolerance with your health care provider if you have these primary risk factors:

- You're age 45 or older and overweight.
- You're younger than age 45 but are overweight, and have a family history of diabetes (learn more at diabetes.org).

Proper screening and tight control of blood sugar levels can help delay or prevent serious complications of diabetes, including eye, kidney or nerve damage as well as heart disease.



“I am a woman in process. I'm just trying like everybody else. I try to take every conflict, every experience, and learn from it. Life is never dull.”

— Oprah Winfrey



International Overdose Awareness Day is

August 31. Drug overdoses are a global health crisis resulting in permanent injuries or death. This observance is a global event to raise awareness of overdose dangers and the importance of using prescription drugs safely. It's also an opportunity to remember those who died from overdoses and to save lives by seeking help for drug misuse. Most deaths from drug overdoses are avoidable. Learn more at overdoseday.com.

Trip Giveaways: What You Need to Know

By Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, AFC

Winning a free vacation sounds too good to be true, and as with anything that is advertised as free, there are costs to consider. With trip giveaways, it is imperative to read the fine print and ask questions.

Possible costs you may have to pay include:

- Meals and drinks.
- Tips for housekeeping, drivers or tour guides.
- Sightseeing expenses, such as entrance fees or tours.
- Taxes.
- Transportation to and from the hotel or airport.
- Transportation around the area you are visiting.
- Trip insurance.

Other things to consider:

Can you bring your spouse or a friend with you? If the hosting party allows for a plus one, what expenses do you have to cover for the additional person?

Understand the timing of the trip. Is a time range available for you to decide when to travel? Are trip dates flexible? Can you travel within the required time allowance? Do you have to pay extra to change dates?

The IRS requires winners to pay taxes on the prize value. The amount or the taxable prize value is determined after you take the trip. If the trip has amenities you don't want, you can decline them to lower the taxable value.

safety solutions

Back to the Beach

There is no doubt that people will be headed back to the beach in record numbers this summer. If you are one of them, make sure you stay safe with these beach basics:

Keep your distance. While we have COVID-19 vaccination, it's still important to maintain at least six feet from the nearest person outside of your group.

Slather on that sunscreen. Make sure you apply a broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB), water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply after two hours or after swimming.

Check weather and water conditions before entering the water. Look for warning flags on beaches and obey them.

Swim only in designated swimming areas with lifeguards on duty. Stay close to shore and away — at least 100 feet — from structures, such as piers and jetties.

Wear shoes or flip-flops to avoid burns from hot sand or cuts from shells or broken glass.

Supervise children at the beach and stay with young children while they are in the water.

Don't dig tunnels or deep holes (no deeper than the knees of the smallest person in your group) in the sand. Fill holes before leaving the area.

Note: Due to the constantly changing pandemic conditions, current circumstances may differ.



5 Tips for Selecting Shades for Kids

SAFETY CORNER

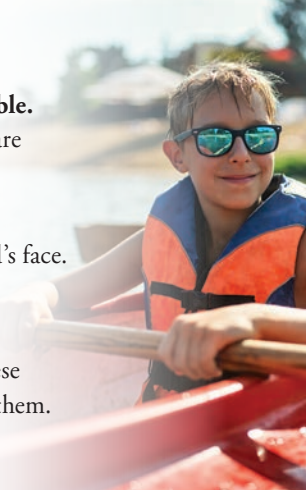
August is Children's Eye Health & Safety Month.



Children younger than six months should be kept out of the sun, if possible.

After age six months, they should start wearing sunglasses, according to eye care experts. Here are five tips for selecting the right shades:

1. Purchase sunglasses that block 100% of both UVA and UVB rays.
2. Look for wraparound sunglasses. **Tip:** They should fit snugly on your child's face.
3. Select polycarbonate, impact-resistant, scratch-proof lenses with bendable, unbreakable frames.
4. Give your children a choice between a few pairs of sunglasses that meet these safety specifications. They will be more likely to wear them if they choose them.
5. Set a good example by wearing sunglasses.



Vaccinations: Vital for Those with Chronic Conditions



Vaccines are one of the safest ways for you to protect your health throughout life. They work with your body's natural defenses to help you safely develop immunity to disease. In the U.S., vaccines have greatly reduced or eliminated several infectious diseases that once took many lives. However, the viruses and bacteria that cause these diseases still exist, and they can still make us sick if we aren't vaccinated against them.

Immunization is especially important for those with chronic medical conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, prior stroke, liver disease, renal disease, HIV infection, asthma and weakened immunity.

Consider the flu. Most people who become sick with flu recover in a few days. But those with chronic disease can develop serious complications, such as pneumonia, bronchitis and sinus infection. Their weakened immune systems can raise their risk for flu-related side effects, and worsen their health problems.

For example, having a history of heart attack can dramatically raise your risk of being hospitalized with serious flu symptoms, or having another heart attack.

Other examples: Those with asthma may experience a worsening of asthma symptoms that flu vaccination can help prevent. It can also help maintain proper blood sugar levels in those with diabetes.

In addition to an annual flu vaccine, other vaccinations — especially important for those with impaired health — include:

- COVID-19: reduces your risk of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) infection.
- Tdap: protects against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough.
- Pneumococcal: protects against serious lung diseases.
- Zoster: protects against shingles.
- Hepatitis B: lowers the risk of liver cancer.
- HPV (for both genders through age 26): protects against most causes of cervical cancers.

Check with your health care provider about these and any other vaccines recommended for you based on your age, lifestyle and current health condition. Also ask about any vaccines you should avoid.

What about vaccine side effects? While they are rare, usually mild and relatively brief, vaccination can cause a serious problem, sometimes due to an allergic reaction. The CDC stresses that severe side effects are rare, and vaccination is safer than accepting the risks for the diseases they prevent.

And did you know? The 2020-2021 flu season was much milder due to actions, such as wearing masks, physical distancing, less travel and more people getting the flu shot during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020-2021 season had the lowest number of cases on record, according to the CDC.



August is Immunization Awareness Month.

Flu shot reminder: The CDC recommends that everyone age six months and older get an annual flu vaccine. We are susceptible to many different influenza viruses every year, and they are constantly changing. U.S. flu vaccines are reviewed annually and updated as needed to match circulating viruses. Flu vaccines protect against the three or four viruses (depending on the vaccine) that research suggests will be most common. Learn more at [cdc.gov/flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu).

And if you haven't gotten the COVID-19 shot, schedule it as soon as possible. You may receive one or two doses, depending on the vaccine you receive. Learn more at [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).



DR. ZORBA'S corner

Powerful Produce

You've heard about how important fruits and vegetables are for your health.

New research using data from the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study and Nurses' Health Study have drawn some conclusive results — five servings a day is associated with lowering your risk of heart attack, stroke and cancer. The study involved more than 100,000 men and women. Now, there are some exceptions to this 5-a-day rule. Starchy vegetables, such as corn and potatoes, and fruit juices don't count because they don't have the fiber you need to keep your arteries clean and your gut working well. **Bottom line:** Head to your local farmers market and stock up on nature's goodness.

— Zorba Paster, MD

August Fill-in-the-Blank Puzzle

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

- 1 The most-searched diet trend in 2021 is the _____ diet.
- 2 In the U.S., the _____ population is increasing.
- 3 Surveys show 90% of people recently _____ someone.
- 4 Stress may cause your _____ to release extra glucose into your bloodstream, potentially leading to type 2 diabetes.
- 5 Drug overdoses are a _____ health crisis.
- 6 Always apply a _____, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside.
- 7 Children younger than _____ should be kept out of the sun, if possible.
- 8 _____ are one of the safest ways for you to protect your health throughout life.



You'll find the answers at personalbest.com/extras/Aug2021puzzle.pdf.

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, **Live Stronger**, is at personalbest.com/extras/21V8tools.

Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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