

TH TOP HEALTH®

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter.

APRIL 2014



Sleep to Better Health

Millions of Americans have trouble sleeping. And poor sleep may be costing you more than fatigue.

Sleep deprivation is connected to numerous health problems:

- People with insomnia or sleep apnea (breathing cessation) have increased risk for cardiovascular conditions, such as high blood pressure, stroke, coronary heart disease and irregular heartbeat.
- Insufficient sleep raises the risk for type 2 diabetes, depression and metabolic changes linked to obesity.

The good news? You can sleep better.

First, try exercise. Even a little regular exercise helps. According to the National Sleep Foundation's 2013 Sleep in America poll:

- Seventy-six percent to 83% of exercisers (including vigorous, moderate and light exercisers) said their sleep quality was very good or fairly good.
- Non-exercisers are twice as likely as exercisers to have sleep apnea, a major risk for heart trouble.

Identify your sleep robbers. Is worry keeping you awake? Maybe it's caffeine (especially close to bedtime) or medications, pain, indigestion or other physical problems. Record your sleep patterns for a month to identify the culprits.



National Infant Immunization Week is April 26 to May 3. This event highlights the importance of infant immunization, advances education and celebrates the achievements of protecting babies from 14 vaccine-preventable diseases before age 2. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.



"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing." – Walt Disney

QuikQuiz™:

Exercise – Safe and Sound

Do you know the best ways to avoid injury and make the most of your exercise time?

Test your knowledge:

- 1 Doing the same strength-training routine month after month is not the most effective way to get fit.

True__ False__

- 2 Impractical exercise goals often lead to:
 - a. a lack of motivation.
 - b. improper technique.
 - c. discontinuing exercise.
 - d. all of the above.

- 3 If you don't have enough time to exercise 30 to 60 minutes, you may as well not exercise that day.

True__ False__

- 4 Only beginning exercisers need to warm up prior to vigorous activity.

True__ False__

>> Answers on the other side.



Preparing for Health Screenings

Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAP

Regardless of your age, health and gender, you need periodic health screenings to help detect diseases, even before symptoms appear. Early detection may make the condition easier to treat. Preparing for these tests is well worth any inconvenience they might cause.

Here's how to prepare for some common screening tests, including:

- ✓ **Blood glucose.** Fast for 12 hours (plain water is OK) before the blood draw.

>> Continued on the other side.



It's important to watch what you eat. But it's also vital to pay attention to **how much** you eat. Plate size, oversized restaurant servings and the size of food packages can all impact your food intake without your knowing it.

Portion explosion: The size of our dishes has increased by about 40% in the past 50 years. The number of large-sized supermarket items has increased 10-fold since 1970. Supersized restaurant meals are 250% larger than recommended serving sizes.

People consume about 92% of what's in front of them. So when they use large plates, fix big meals and buy in bulk, the result is increased calorie consumption and weight gain. Since supersized portions are the norm, it's easy to mindlessly overeat.

Take control: Stay aware of invitations to overeat, such as 20-ounce glasses or packages of high-calorie, sugary snacks. Cut back on calories 6 ways:

- Use measuring cups to see how much your dishes hold.
- Eat on salad plates instead of dinner plates.
- Use teaspoons instead of soup spoons.
- Switch to smaller bowls and glasses.
- Avoid buying in bulk whenever possible.
- Split large restaurant entrées with a dinner companion.



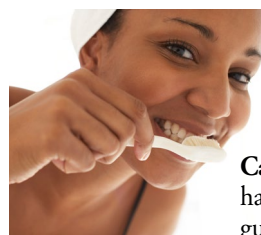
To get started, try a 9- to 10-inch plate for your next meal.

QuikQuiz™: Exercise >>Continued from the other side.

ANSWERS

- 1 True** – Using the same muscles over and over for strength-training workouts can strengthen specific muscles, but repetitive workouts may lead to a fitness plateau, or lack of progress. They may also contribute to overuse injuries such as stiff or sore joints. Vary your activities for overall fitness.
- 2 d** – Make your exercise convenient and a bit challenging, but not so difficult you get discouraged from lack of progress.
- 3 False** – Exercising even 10 minutes is beneficial and keeps you “moving” toward your fitness goals.
- 4 False** – Even the most skilled athletes warm up. It allows your body to adjust to the physical demands of your activity. One way is to mimic the movements you'll be doing in the workout, such as a moderate walk before hiking.

Raw milk – don't drink it. You may have heard the claim that it has benefits that pasteurized milk lacks. There is no credible scientific evidence that it does. Infections such as E. coli, salmonella or tuberculosis can easily be spread from raw milk. Babies, pregnant mothers, the elderly and anyone on chemotherapy are at high risk. Drinking pasteurized milk is just like wearing a seat belt. It protects you from risk. – Zorba Paster, MD



Emotional Stress and Gum Disease

Can stress harm your gums? Several studies have shown a possible connection between gum disease and stress, anxiety and depression.

Even short episodes of high stress seem to increase bacteria-producing plaque that irritates and infects the gums. Left untreated, plaque can progress to swollen, bleeding gums, periodontal disease and loose or shifting teeth.

Stress may also produce teeth grinding, or bruxism. Do you clench and grind your teeth during the day or night, sometimes subconsciously? Ongoing grinding can damage your teeth and change your bite over time.

Other factors contributing to gum disease include: smoking, chewing tobacco, diabetes, aging, poor nutrition, genetic tendency and poor oral hygiene. People who are seriously stressed or depressed may neglect their basic dental needs.

Make the effort to brush and floss properly, and see your dentist for regular checkups. Relieving stress or depression is essential to wellness – and potentially a healthy mouth. Adopt new coping strategies, such as regular exercise and sound sleep. Talking about your concerns can help, too.



Preparing for Health Screenings

>>Continued from the other side.

✓ **Blood lipid panel.** Before testing for cholesterol and triglycerides, fast for 12 hours (plain water is OK).

✓ **Colorectal exam.** Ask your provider if you need to stop medications or dietary supplements before the exam. Follow steps for evacuation before having a colonoscopy or barium enema.



For women only:

✓ **Pap smear.** Schedule your appointment about 1 or 2 weeks after you expect your period. If your period starts, call your provider to reschedule. Before testing, avoid intercourse, douching, tampons and birth control foams or jellies for 2 days before testing.

✓ **Mammogram.** Get screened when your breasts are the least tender, usually the week following your period. Avoid wearing any skin products on test day.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/Apr14tools.

Next Month: Low Back Pain