

# Healthy Living Newsletter

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## Prevent Antibiotic Overuse

Antibiotics are meant to treat bacterial infections. They are not effective against viruses such as those that cause the common cold. Over prescribing them has resulted in the development of bacteria that do not respond to antibiotics that may have worked in the past.

Among those that are becoming harder to treat are pneumococcal infections (which cause pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, and meningitis).

Here are suggestions on how to use antibiotics properly:

- Only take antibiotics as recommended by your doctor. Never take any that were prescribed for someone else, or that were prescribed for you to treat a different illness.
- If your doctor says you have a virus, you should not ask for an antibiotic.
- Take your antibiotic exactly as prescribed, and always finish your prescription. Never save some of your antibiotic to treat a future infection.

Source: [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)



## Halloween Safety Tips

Before children start out on their trick-or-treat rounds, there are several safety tips that parents should remember:

- Make sure that an adult or older responsible youth will be supervising the outing for children under age 12.
- Wear light-colored or reflective-type clothing so you are more visible.
- Use face paint rather than masks, which might cover the child's eyes.
- Carry a flashlight to light your way.
- Plan and discuss the route trick-or-treaters intend to follow. Know the names of older children's companions.
- Instruct your children to travel only in familiar areas and along an established route.
- Teach your children to stop only at houses or apartment buildings that are well-lit and never to enter a stranger's home.
- Establish a return time.
- Tell your youngsters not to eat any treat until they return home.

Sources: [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org) & [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) & [www.halloween-safety.com](http://www.halloween-safety.com)



## Share the Road – Keep Motorcyclists Safe on our Roadways

- Remember the motorcycle is a vehicle with all the rights and privileges of any other vehicle on the roadway. Always allow a motorcyclist the full lane width – never try to share a lane.
- Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a line of traffic and at intersections.
- Do not be fooled by a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle – motorcycle signals are often not self-canceling and riders forget to turn them off.
- Remember that road conditions, which are minor annoyances to passenger vehicles, pose major hazards to motorcyclists.
- Allow more following distance, three to four seconds, when following a motorcycle, so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver in an emergency. Do not tailgate.

Source: [www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org)

## Older Americans

Older Americans are living longer than ever and enjoying better health. In 2006, there were an estimated 37 million Americans 65 and older – almost two percent of the population. By 2030, it is estimated that 71.5 million people will be 65 and older – almost 20 percent of the population.

Even though life expectancy for Americans continues to increase for those 65 years of age, it is lower than in countries such as Canada, France, Japan, and Sweden. For example, Japanese women 65 years of age live 3.2 years longer than women in the United States. Among men, the difference is 1.2 years.

Source: [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus)

### Could you spot an impaired driver on the road?

Drivers under the influence of alcohol often display certain characteristic driving behaviors. Keep these in mind to avoid a dangerous situation.

- Weaving, swerving, drifting, or straddling the center line
- Driving on the wrong side of the road
- Driving at a very slow speed
- Stopping without cause or braking erratically
- Turning abruptly or responding slowly to traffic signals
- Driving with windows down in cold weather
- Driving with headlights off at night

If you spot an impaired driver, stay a safe distance from the vehicle and alert the police.

Source: [www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org)

### Reminder: Make Fitness A Part Of Your Daily Routine

The biggest challenge to any new fitness plan is simply getting started. From a walk around the block to lunges in the living room, start simple by incorporating just 10 minutes of exercise into your daily routine. Your body will instantly feel energized and you will begin to build good fitness habits.



## Mature Drivers

The U.S. Census Bureau has determined that by 2030, one in five drivers will be age 65 or older, which means there will be more than 30 million older drivers on our roads.

One thing older drivers can do to adapt to factors that affect their driving is to make changes to their vehicles that will make them “fit” better. These adjustments will make drivers more comfortable and in control in their vehicles.

Older drivers may need to find ways to cope with physical changes that include:

- Reduced strength and physical endurance
- Stiff neck and limited neck rotation
- Visual impairment, including problems with depth perception, high and low contrast vision, night vision, and delayed recovery from glare
- Effect of medication
- Reduced overall range of motion

Checking to see that you and your car are as good a fit as possible can be as important to your safety as a mechanical checkup. A good fit between you and your vehicle means that you have:

- A clear line of sight over the steering wheel. You should be able to see at least three inches above the wheel.
- Plenty of room between your breastbone (or chest) and the front airbag and steering wheel. The ideal distance is at least 10 to 12 inches.
- A seat you fit in comfortably and safely. You should be able to adjust the seat for good visibility and easy access to controls.
- Properly adjusted headrests. The center of the headrest should be against the back of your head, not against your neck.
- Easy access to gas and brake pedals.
- A seat belt that holds you in the proper position and remains comfortable as you drive. The lower part of the belt should go across your hips, and the shoulder harness should go across your rib cage and not under your arm.

Source: [www.aaa.com](http://www.aaa.com)



## Taste Disorders

### How many taste sensations do we have?

We can identify five different taste sensations: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and umami or “savory”. Umami is the taste of glutamate, a building block of protein found in chicken broth, meat extracts, and some cheeses.

### Is there a normal decline in our ability to taste as we grow older?

There is a small decline in taste for people over 60. Most older people will not notice it, because normal aging does not greatly affect our sense of taste.

### What are some of the common causes of taste disorders?

The most common causes are medications, infections, head trauma, and dental problems. Most people who have a problem with taste are taking medications or have had a head or neck injury. Gum disease, dry mouth, and dentures also can contribute to taste problems. Other causes are radiation therapy for head or neck cancers, heavy smoking, vitamin deficiencies, and Bell’s palsy.

Source: [nhseniorhealth.gov](http://nhseniorhealth.gov)

## What are Energy Drinks?

Energy drinks claim to be designed to increase stamina and improve physical performance. But, these benefits have not been scientifically proven and certain ingredients and supplements may actually be harmful.

Energy drinks may contain as much as 80 mg of caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant, which acts on the central nervous system to speed up messages to and from the brain so that the person feels more aware and active. Caffeine also is a strong diuretic and will cause an increase in urine output and therefore enhance dehydration.

The main ingredient in all “energy drinks” is carbohydrates or sugar. Research has shown that a concentration higher than 25g/oz slows gastric emptying. This means that the water which dilutes the sugar will not enter the blood stream, which enhances dehydration.

Besides containing large doses of caffeine and sugar, energy drinks also contain other legal stimulants like ephedrine, guarana, and ginseng. These ingredients can promote greater dehydration and could lead to heat related illness.

*Source: Cool Solutions for the UPS Employee*

## Calorie Counting & Eating Out

The following web sites offer a nutritional breakdown of the dishes that many restaurants offer, along with a listing of calories, fat, and carbohydrates.

- [www.calorieking.com](http://www.calorieking.com)
- [www.dietfacts.com](http://www.dietfacts.com)

## Whole Grains A to Z

**Barley** – It is one of the oldest cultivated grains. Egyptians buried mummies with necklaces of barley, and centuries later Edward I of England standardized the inch as equal to “three barley seeds”. It is a highly adaptable crop, growing north of the Arctic Circle and as far South as Ethiopia.

**Health bonus:** The fiber in barley is especially healthy; it may lower cholesterol even more effectively than oat fiber.

*Source: [www.wholegraincouncil.org](http://www.wholegraincouncil.org)*

## Caffeine and Sugar

The following are examples of the caffeine and sugar content of some popular energy drinks and soft drinks (per 8 oz):

Beverage	Caffeine Content	Sugar Content	Added Supplements
180	90 mg	33 gm	Yes
Rock Star	80 mg	30 gm	Yes
Red Bull	80 mg	28 gm	Yes
Full Throttle	72 mg	29 gm	Yes
Monster	70 mg	27 gm	Yes
"V"	78 mg	11 gm	Yes
Coffee	80 mg	0 gm	No
Mountain Dew	36 mg	20 gm	No
Coca-Cola	33 mg	27 gm	No
Diet Coke	32 mg	0 gm	No
Diet Pepsi	29mg	0 gm	No
Pepsi	27mg	27 gm	No
Water	0 mg	0 gm	None

*Source: Cool Solutions for the UPS Employee*



## Helping Children Grow Up Healthy in Mind and Body

Good mental health allows children to think clearly, develop socially, learn new skills, build self-esteem, and develop a positive mental outlook. The following are tips for a child’s good mental health:

- **Give children unconditional love** – Children need to know that your love does not depend on accomplishments.
- **Nurture children’s confidence and self-esteem** – Praise and encourage them. Set realistic goals for them. Be honest about your mistakes. Avoid sarcasm.
- **Encourage children to play** – Play time is as important to a child’s development as food. Play helps children to be creative, develop problem-solving skills and self-control, and learn how to get along with others.
- **Enroll children in an after school activity, especially if they are otherwise home alone after school** – This is a great way for kids to stay productive, learn something new, gain self-esteem, and have something to look forward to during the week
- **Provide a safe and secure environment** – Fear can be very real for a child. Try to find out what is frightening him or her. Be a loving, patient, and reassuring parent, not critical.
- **Give appropriate guidance and discipline when necessary** – Be firm, but kind and realistic with your expectations. The goal is not to control the child, but to help him or her learn self-control.
- **Communicate** – Make time each day after work and school to listen to your children and talk with them about what is happening in their lives. Share emotions and feelings with your children.

*Source: [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)*

## Health Tip: Understanding Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is an illness that causes people to obsess over daily activities. While everyone has daily habits and behaviors, when they interfere with daily life it could be a possible warning sign of OCD.

The American Academy of Family Physicians lists these potential examples of OCD:

- Obsessing over whether things are done in order or correctly, in an exact fashion.
- Being unusually afraid of dirt or germs, and as a result, repeatedly engaging in activities such as washing hands or showering.
- Constantly and repeatedly checking on a situation, such as making sure home doors are locked or appliances are shut off.
- Thinking about specific sounds, images, words, or numbers repeatedly.
- Seeking constant reassurance or approval.

*Source: health.discovery.com*

## First Aid Myths

### Leaning your head back during a nosebleed

Leaning back your head to stop a nose bleed is a common misconception. If you are suffering from a nosebleed, tilting the head backward or lying down can actually allow blood to run down the back of the throat or be ingested. The National Safety Council advises to:

- Sit down and tilt your head slightly forward with the mouth open.
- Pinch the nostrils together just below the bridge of the nose for 10 minutes. Try to breathe through the mouth and not speak, swallow, cough, or sniff. After 10 minutes, release the pressure slowly; pinch the nostrils again for another 10 minutes if bleeding continues. If someone with a nosebleed is gasping or choking on blood in the throat, call 911.

*Source: National Safety Council*

## Gout

Gout occurs when needle-shaped monosodium urate crystals build up in joints and tissues. The presence of these crystals can cause:

- Recurrent attacks of painful joint inflammation (called gouty arthritis)
- The formation of tophi, or lumps of collected crystals under the skin, in the joints, and in bone
- Kidney stones
- Impaired kidney function (called gouty nephropathy or urate nephropathy)

Gout is a controllable disease that, with proper treatment, need not lead to any long-term effects.

Monosodium urate crystals form when there is too much uric acid (also called urate) in the blood – a metabolic disorder called hyperuricemia. Uric acid is produced when foods containing purines (chemical compounds that are building blocks in the construction of DNA and RNA), such as in organ meats, seafood (especially anchovies), and gravies, are broken down and when purine nucleotides (DNA and RNA building blocks) are recycled in the body. High uric acid production, low uric acid excretion, or a combination of both can result in hyperuricemia and gout.

Approximately 10 percent of people produce too much uric acid. More than 90 percent of people with gout, however, do not excrete enough uric acid in their urine. There are certain inborn errors of metabolism that can cause hyperuricemia, but these genetic disorders account for a very small fraction of people with gout.

*Source: www.arthritis.org*



## How do I stretch?

Stretch gently after you warm up your muscles with an easy 5-minute walk and again after you cool down. Do not bounce or hold your breath when you stretch. Perform slow movements and stretch only as far as you feel comfortable.

### • Side Reach

Reach one arm over your head and to the side. Keep your hips steady and your shoulders straight to the side. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat on the other side.

### • Wall Push

Lean your hands on a wall with your feet about 3 to 4 feet away from the wall. Bend one knee and point it toward the wall. Keep your back leg straight with your foot flat and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat with the other leg.

### • Knee Pull

Lean your back against a wall. Keep your head, hips, and feet in a straight line. Pull one knee to your chest, hold for 10 seconds, then repeat with the other leg.

### • Leg Curl

Pull your right foot to you buttocks with your right hand. Stand straight and keep your knee pointing straight to the ground. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat with your left foot and hand.

### • Hamstring

Sit on a sturdy bench or hard surface so that your left leg is stretched out on the bench with your toes pointing up. Keep your right foot flat on the floor. Straighten your back, and if you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh, hold for 10 seconds and repeat with your right leg. [If you do not feel a stretch, lean forward from your hips until you do feel a stretch.]

*Source: win.niddk.nih.gov*